Cricket Second Test: England v South Africa

England's hopes wilt in the heat

Mike Selvey at Lord's

ENGLAND lost the second Test by 10 wickets here, giving South Africa a one-match advantage in the series. It was ineptitude of a quality in which England appear to be brand leaders, even at a time when they appear to have their strongest squad for years.

Having been bowled out by Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock in prime bowling conditions on Saturday England, following on 250 behind, were 105 for two overnight with Nasser Hussain unbeaten on 52.

They lost the nightwatchman Dean Headley early on but then flourished gloriously as Hussain and Alec Stewart took the attack to the bowlers with a fourth-wicket stand of 116, savaging the second new ball in the process. Shortly after lunch Hussain, to his unbridled joy, reached his first century at Lord's in any cricket and his seventh in Tests, and went on to reach 105, while Stewart made 56.

There it all but ended. The batsmen collapsed in the afternoon heat like guardsmen at the Trooping of the Colour. In the space of a dozen overs, 222 for three had become 233 for nine, the damage done not by Donald or Pollock but by the second-string spear-carriers Lance Klusener and Jacques Kallis, who swung the ball around disconcertingly at times.

Kallis, on the ground that became so familiar to him during his summer with Middlesex last year, took four for 24, the best figures of his Test career.

This may have been the longest day but, had it not been for a jaunty last-wicket partnership of 31 between Angus Fraser and Robert Croft, the match would not have extended beyond the tea interval.

As it was, the prospect of chasing all of 15 to win proved none too daunting for Gary Kirsten and Daryll Cullinan (opening instead of Adam Bacher, who hurt his right shoulder in the field).

Fraser's first over was dispatched for 10, including two boundaries to Kirsten, and a no-ball from Cork followed by Cullinan's clip to the mid-wicket fence saw them home at the start of the following over.

There had been no indication of impending havoc during an exhilarating morning session which saw Donald and Pollock seen off and Paul Adams attacked with willingness. Fifty-nine runs came from 14 overs with the new ball, Hussain rampaging from 73 to 100 with the aid of six boundaries and a three.

It was Stewart's dismissal which sparked the slide. Driving at Kallis, he appeared to have edged to the wicketkeeper, although his demeanour and the long pause to watch the replay screen before he actually entered the Long Room conveyed the impression that he had not made contact.



Lording it . . . South Africa celebrate another wicket as England continue their sorry collapse at Lord's PHOTO: JOHN MARSH

Two overs later Graham Thorpe was given out lbw without scoring — a poor decision this by George Sharp, the ball pitching outside leg stump.

Hussain followed likewise, delaying his departure a fraction too long for comfort, even though this decision by Darrell Hair looked fair enough. Mark Ramprakash was then immediately yorked by Klusener, although goodness only knows the state of his mind; on Saturday, amid the carnage, he had played out of his socks for an hour and a half, only to be adjudged by Hair to have been caught behind even though the ball came off his elbow. Ramprakash dawdled at the crease and then spoke to Hair on his way back to the pavilion. It was not to compliment him on the quality of his decision.

Hair reported "physical and verbal dissent" to the referee Javed Burki, who because of "the state of the match and Ramprakash's involvement" delayed his decision "until an appropriate time".

This appeared to be while Ramprakash was waiting to bat, when he was informed that he would be fined 25 per cent of his match fee and receive a one-match ban suspended for six months pending good behaviour.

The outcome of the match was a far cry from the first day when Stewart won the toss and put South Africa in. Cork grabbed four quick wickets and left the visitors reeling on 46 for 4. But Hansie Cronje and Jonty Rhodes then steadied the ship, and the side had 360 on the board when the innings closed on the second day — a total their bowlers made too hard for England's batsmen to reach.

Scoreboard

SOUTH AFRICA
First Innings
A M Bacher c Stewart b Cork
G Kirsten b Cork
J H Kallis b Cork
D J Cullinan c Stewart b Cork
*W J Cronje c Ramprakash b Ealham
J N Rhodes c Stewart b Fraser
S M Pollock c Hussain b Cork 14
M V Boucher c Stewart b Headley 36
L Klusener b Headley 34
A A Donald not out 7
P R Adams c Stewart b Cork
Extras (b1, lb20, nb6) 27
Total (109.1 overs) 360
Bowling: Fraser 31-8-78-1; [illegible] 31.1-5-[illegible] [illegible]5-2-53-1; Headley 22-2-69-2; Ealham [illegible]; Croft 9-3-23-0

ENGLAND
First Innings
S P James c Boucher b Donald 10
M A Atherton c Kirsten b Pollock 0
N Hussain c Boucher b Pollock 15
*A J Stewart lbw b [illegible] b Donald 14
D W Headley c B[illegible] b Kallis 10
G P Thorpe c B[illegible] Boucher b Donald 11
M Ramprakash [illegible] 1
M A Ealham [illegible] b Pollock 12
D G Cork c K[illegible] out 6
R D B Croft [illegible] Boucher b Donald 1
A R C Fraser [illegible] 20
Extras (b[illegible] 10, nb2)
Total (5[illegible].3 overs) 110
Bowling: Donald 15.3-5-32-5; Pollock 19-[illegible]; Klusener 8-5-10-0; Kallis 5-3-8-1

ENGLAND
Second Innings
M A Atherton c Kallis b Adams 44
S P James c Kallis b Pollock [illegible]
N Hussain lbw b Klusener 105
D W Headley c Cronje b Adams [illegible]
*A J Stewart c Boucher b Kallis 56
G P Thorpe lbw b Kallis 0
M R Ramprakash b Klusener [illegible]
M A Ealham b Kallis [illegible]
D G Cork c Boucher b Kallis [illegible]
R D B Croft not out [illegible]
A R C Fraser c Pollock b Adams [illegible]
Extras (b1, lb[illegible], w5, nb7) [illegible]
Total (120 overs) [illegible]
Bowling: Donald 24-6-[illegible]; Pollock 2[illegible]-29-1; Klusener 23-5-54-2; Kallis 10-[illegible]; Adams 23-7-62-3; Cronje 4-3-6-0

SOUTH AFRICA
Second Innings
[illegible]
D J Cullinan not out
Extras (nb1) 1
Total (for 0, 1.1 overs) 15

Cryptic crossword by Plodge

Across

1,20 Letter saying "Thanks for the pudding" (5,3,6)
5 Dish out Latin spiel (6)
9 Ashamed to have given King Edward the bird? (9)
11 Sometimes gas about poetry standards (5)
12 Rogue desired to follow about old lag . . . thought better of it (12)
15 Bugs overran the Italian church (4)
16 Swearing to ruin a job reunion (10)
18 Compensate noble queen, do! (10)
19 The monster's so overcome (4)
21 Flashy or simple, organised tours taken here in France (12)
24 Mr. Nesbitt returned thanks for capital (5)
25 Toff entertains one before others, all privates (9)
26 Not keen on a piece of poetry? (6)
27 Little Miss Nightingale, free to fly shortly with embroidery (8)

Down

1 See 23
2 Urges drugs taking? Horse, they say (4)
3 Stops working the Spanish oil (6)
4 Bring no turn of cast after the 23's in play (3,3,7)
6 Layabout rotter, last scion of country folk (8)
7 The two Henrys, drunks, got one the same (5,5)
8 No blame's attached to resemblances with side in posh places? (10)
10 Abnormal lady's failure to embrace the party (13)
13 Dark 23, the captive deliverer (5,5)
14 Possible to have quail (brace) cooked? (10)
17 Representations to keep bar laws (8)
20 See 1 across
22 The lad's away but Laurie's home (4)
23,1 down The president's wife spotted grub (8)

Last week's solution

Golf US Open

Janzen keeps a level head

David Davies in San Francisco

LEE JANZEN, benefiting from one of the more bizarre incidents in major championship history, won the US Open last Sunday for the second time. He beat the man he also beat in 1993, Payne Stewart, who had been the overnight leader, with an advantage of four shots over the field.

But Janzen, with a final round of 68, two-under par, had overtaken Stewart by the 13th and although the latter got back on level terms with a birdie at the 14th, he dropped a shot at the long 16th and that was that.

Janzen, watching the denouement on TV, wept at the moment of victory when Stewart failed to hole a 25-footer on the last green, finishing with a four-over par 74. Janzen wins $535,000 and Stewart $315,000.

But Janzen's charge to the title could have been halted on the 5th hole. His tee shot clattered into the trees and although the marshals were early on the scene, the ball could not be found. So Janzen decided that he had better go back and play another ball from the tee.

He had started to walk back when he was hailed by the marshals — the ball had dropped from a tree and was now available to be hit. Janzen could not reach the green from where he was, and his third shot was not particularly good either, running through the green and on to the short fringe grass. From there, though, he chipped in.

It was one of the most outrageous pars in the history of championship golf, for if he had had to accept a lost ball, a six or seven would undoubtedly have gone on the card, for the 5th is 457 yards of terror. It dog-legs to the left, the fairway is cambered to the left and it is just a very hard hole.

Breaks like that are essential in championship play these days, with the fields so tightly bunched, and it has to be said that Stewart had the reverse at the 12th where his tee shot, in the middle of the fairway, ran into a sanded divot. It left him a hugely difficult shot, which, although it was only 147 yards, had to be hit off a soft, uneven surface.

Stewart found a greenside bunker, dropped a shot and his lead was reduced to one. That disappeared at the short 13th where Janzen hit the perfect tee shot which finished four feet from the hole. Stewart dropped a shot at the same hole and Janzen began to feel he had his second championship when he found the green at the par-four 17th in two. He parred the hole and gave a clenched first salute, as if sensing victory.

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Leaders mark great leap forward

John Gittings in Beijing

PRESIDENT Clinton issued strong calls for human rights in China on Monday in a speech at Beijing university, whose students were the engine behind the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square.

Mr Clinton, who began a nine-day visit to China last week, said the United States did not seek to impose its vision on others — as Asian leaders often complain. "But we are convinced that certain rights are universal . . . I believe that everywhere, people aspire to be treated with dignity . . . to give voice to their opinions."

Mr Clinton argued that economic security was an essential element of freedom but that "true freedom must mean more than economic opportunity. In America we believe that freedom itself is indivisible . . . We believe, and our experience demonstrates, that freedom strengthens stability," he said.

US officials hoped that Mr Clinton's remarks would be broadcast across China, as was his vigorous debate over human rights with President Jiang Zemin last weekend.

Beijing unexpectedly showed the post-summit press conference live on national television, a move hailed by White House officials as a complete vindication of the Clinton administration's policy of "constructive engagement".

In their one other significant concession at the summit, the Chinese agreed to "detarget" nuclear weapons aimed at America. Washington is to reciprocate.

The US is not just bringing fast food and technology to China, officials argued, it is carrying "a very strong message to the people" about democracy during the visit.

During the televised press conference Mr Clinton was able to speak on the subject of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in terms never heard before publicly in China. "I believe, and the American people believe," he said, "that the use of force and the tragic loss of life was wrong." He also urged China to open talks with Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama.

Mr Jiang said that if China had not taken "resolute measures" in 1989, the country would have fallen into chaos.

Mr Clinton left Beijing for Shanghai on Monday as the implications of a dramatic leap forward in US-China relations began to sink in.

The two days Mr Clinton spent in the Chinese capital turned into an unprecedented love-in between the White House and President Jiang Zemin's regime.

Both sides now appear to attach supreme importance to developing their "partnership". And both presidents have conceded ground on human rights to consummate their new relationship.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

UN team in Iraq discovers deadly nerve gas

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE prospects for an early end to sanctions against Iraq suffered a serious setback last week with a report that United Nations weapons inspectors have found traces of deadly — and still usable — VX nerve gas in destroyed missile warheads.

The discovery, reported to the UN Security Council by Richard Butler, head of the Unscom inspectorate, contradicts Iraq's claim that it was unable to produce a weapon using the toxic nerve gas, and provoked an immediate American warning against relaxing sanctions.

"If they have VX loaded into shells or warheads, it could still be usable even after all this time," a well-placed source said. "If they have it buried in the desert they can dig it up and use it against anyone they like."

The evidence is contained in a United States army laboratory analysis of warhead fragments recovered by Unscom in March. The warheads dated from the 1991 Gulf war and were found to contain significant amounts of VX, a few drops of which can kill a human being within minutes. Iraq dismissed the report as "an outrageous lie".

The key find is the presence of a stabilising agent that prolongs the shelf life of chemical agents. "This is a major blow to Iraqi concealment efforts," an official said. "It shows Saddam's chemical warfare programme was far more advanced than they admit."

The Security Council last week maintained sanctions against Baghdad after a briefing by Mr Butler. He said that he had no doubt about the laboratory's finding on nerve gas. Unscom has to issue a clean bill of health before sanctions can be lifted.

Iraq, with French and Russian support, was hoping to persuade the Security Council to lift sanctions by the end of the year.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

Ulster march row mars poll results

John Mullin

ORANGEMEN on Monday appeared to be heading for clashes with the Royal Ulster Constabulary and army after vowing to defy a ban on their traditional route on the Drumcree march, a notorious annual flash-point in Northern Ireland.

They confirmed that they will attempt to march down the nationalist Garvaghy Road in Portadown after a church service in Drumcree, Co Armagh, on Sunday. The Parades Commission, which rules on contentious marches, decided that they must avoid the road.

A massive security operation, with the purpose of preventing Orangemen from all over Northern Ireland descending on the area, is expected. Widespread roadblocks are under consideration, but violent clashes appear to be inevitable.

The decision overshadowed the results of last week's elections to the new assembly in Northern Ireland. It was, on the face of it, the worst performance of the Ulster Unionists. They won a mere 21.3 per cent of the vote, and took second place for the first time to the nationalist SDLP.

And yet the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, somehow managed to crawl from the wreckage of his party and over the latest hurdle he has had to face since becoming leader three years ago.

This was an election under the single transferable vote system, and first preference votes mattered much less than who grabbed most of the six seats in each of the 18 constituencies. The Ulster Unionists scored well in securing transfers from other parties.

The result is that Mr Trimble emerged as leader of the largest party in the new parliament, with 28 of the 108 seats. He can also rely on the backing of the Progressive Unionist party. David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson, key architects of the deal, were both returned. That puts the Unionist members in favour of the assembly at 30.

The Democratic Unionist party, its vote down slightly, have 20 seats. Bob McCartney's UK Unionists, also opposed to the agreement, won an impressive five places, with three Independent Unionists against the deal also returned.

The total of unionists opposed to the assembly numbers 28, which falls short of the 30 seats needed to force the assembly to make a decision under a cross-community voting system more demanding than a simple majority.

Turnout was down on the referendum, but pro-agreement parties won 75 per cent of the vote, an increase on the 71 per cent of voters endorsing the agreement in May.

There are 80 members who back the agreement. As well as the Ulster Unionists and PUP combined total of 30; the SDLP won 24 seats; Sinn Fein, 18; Alliance six; and Women's Coalition, two.

The SDLP, with 22 per cent of the vote, topped the poll, aided by the higher turnout among nationalists and the splits within unionism.

Sinn Fein, too, posted an increase of more than one-fifth on its vote in the 1996 elections. It won 17.3 per cent and one more seat than expected. The Alliance party polled strongly in areas where the spat between unionism was at its peak, but disappointingly elsewhere.

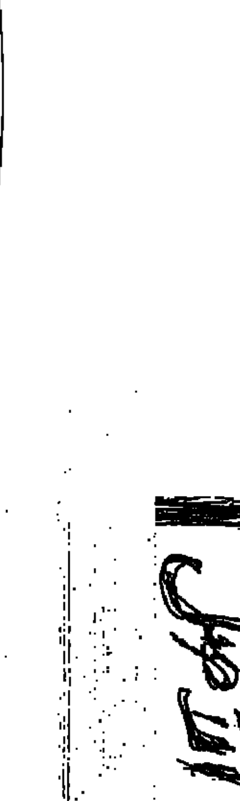
But, while the PUP, linked to the Ulster Volunteer Force, won two places, the other fringe loyalist party, the Ulster Democratic party, missed out.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Ulster Unionists	28
SDLP	24
Democratic Unionists	20
Sinn Fein	18
Alliance	6
United Kingdom Unionists	5
Independent Unionists	3
Progressive Unionists	2
Women's Coalition	2

Comment, page 12

Austria:	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6 50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80



It's official: Europe has banished racism

GARY YOUNGE must be mistaken in his experiences of racism in Europe (On a journey through borders of hate, June 28). I have been attending conferences on racism for years and have been told quite firmly by academics and officials in each country that racism could not possibly exist there.

For instance:

❑ There is no racism towards migrants in Spain because it has been a country of emigration and understands the problems of immigrants.
❑ Racism is not a normal part of Italian culture because Italian fascism, unlike German fascism, was never anti-Semitic.
❑ Germany had been the most institutionally racist state in Europe under the Nazis and, therefore, racism was removed when the Nazi state was abolished.
❑ Racism is absent from French culture because the 1789 revolution institutionalised "liberty, equality and fraternity" in French society.
❑ Sweden has never been a colonial power ruling over non-white peoples.
❑ The Dutch operated a more benevolent form of colonialism, illustrated by a high rate of intermarriage between Dutch and ex-colonial peoples.

If readers have examples to cover the missing European Union countries, then we can really be sure that the EU is free of racism.
(Dr)John Wrench,
Danish Centre for Ethnicity and Migration Research, Esbjerg, Denmark

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GARY YOUNGE reminded us of our struggles against racism — in England. In the eighties my daughter was the only one on her school trip to France to have her bags searched — she is mixed-race, the others were white. In Wetherby, in Yorkshire, she was asked by a policeman if she had absconded from a local secure home while standing on the pavement with a group of fellow sixth-formers. She asked the policeman why he was only putting questions to her. When we complained, a police inspector pointed out that the policeman was an ardent church-goer.
C Pugh,
Birmingham

Real villains escape justice

AN INTERNATIONAL Criminal Court, even one subscribed to by all 185 United Nations member states, must be contemplated with misgivings (Putting the dictators in the dock, June 21). It might indeed serve to punish the likes of Radovan Karadzic or Saddam Hussein, but could it exercise jurisdiction over more powerful and economically heavyweight villains?

The United States in particular is blatant in its attempts to manipulate the UN as a tool of its foreign policy and, by extension, capitalist hegemony — both of which sanction "crimes against peace . . . crimes against humanity". It is hardly plausible that the major powers would support the creation of this court if they believed it would be any kind of check on their self-interest.

Could Third World countries impoverished by foreign exploitation — which turns their land to desert, uproots populations and cripples them with debt — realistically hope for justice from the court? Would it right the wrongs of East Timor at the hands of Indonesia? Would Israel have anything to fear, enjoying as it still does US aid and protection? Will oil multinationals allow future Sani Abachas to stand trial? Could Nicaraguan mothers arraign Ronald Reagan and George Bush, whose crimes against their country had no more justification than President Saddam's invasion of Kuwait?

To trade in weapons is a crime against peace: would armaments moguls, and the governments that aid and abet them, be brought to book for the daily murder of thousands? Get real? We should.
Paul Winstanley,
Palmerston North, New Zealand

THE proposed International Criminal Court has little chance of coming into being unless it is specifically applicable to "losers" only. Otherwise, such stalwarts of international probity and justice as Bill Clinton (unilateral attack on Baghdad without a declaration of war) and Margaret Thatcher (sinking the Belgrano in violation of the rules of engagement) might find themselves in the dock. And that wouldn't do, would it?
Charles Alverson,
Parage, Yugoslavia

One Nation, many rednecks

I WONDER if Clive Hamilton has ever left his think-tank in Canberra (Australia's populist political earthquake, June 21). His article on the rise of the One Nation party ascribes its success to "battlers" who have been marginalised by the major parties as a result of economic rationalism and global free trade. As anyone who has been to rural Queensland knows, many of the electors don't care a stuff about all that leftwing theorising.

As surveys have shown, basically they want their guns back, begrudge "abos" any social assistance, distrust any "smart-arse" politician — especially from down south — worry about subsidies for their pig-farms and are intensely parochial.

There is generally no higher incidence of unemployment than in the One Nation electorates, there is a lower percentage of Asian migrants, and there is a relatively high Aboriginal population. One Nation supporters are no different from the ignorant people who voted for Joh Bjelke-Peterson in the seventies and eighties.

It may be better for Australia that the Pauline Hanson phenomenon is now in the open, so the conservative parties can be open about where they stand on social issues, hopefully with a resultant electoral benefit to the Labor party.
Nigel Hungerford,
Address supplied

PAULINE HANSON said many Asians were not prepared to assimilate (One Nation gains divide Australia, June 21). Maybe the white Europeans could set an example — they've had more than 200 years. Hanson's fish and chips hardly qualify as Aboriginal cuisine. I think it's time for her to visit her local Chinese for a little culinary enlightenment.
Alan Gallagher,
Istanbul, Turkey

TO FUEL her electoral campaign in Queensland, Pauline Hanson suggests that Australian aboriginal peoples want "separate black homelands" similar to the Nunavut Territory created through the 1993 Nunavut land claim agreement between Inuit and the government of Canada (Howard scorns "deranged" Hanson, June 14). This is an utter canard.

Anyone who lives in Nunavut — including recent arrivals from the south — can vote in municipal, territorial and federal elections. Moreover, Inuit are proud Canadians who stand up for Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic. Through the Nunavut land claim agreement Inuit are joining, not leaving, the Canadian federation. Through ignorance or disingenuity Ms Hanson has her Canadian "facts" completely wrong, warranting a formal apology to Inuit and the Canadian government.
(Dr) Terry Fenge,
Ottawa, Ontario

Put money on learning

MARTIN KETTLE has got it wrong: there is no demonstrable link between the passage of Proposition 13 and the deplorable state of education in California (Rude awakening for California dreamers, May 31). There is no argument about the latter, except from the teachers' unions. Where there is argument is at the state capitol in Sacramento. On budget day legislators again failed to submit a budget on time to the governor for signature. They are arguing about the disposition of a $4 billion budget surplus.

This is not the fruits of "the California dream go[ing] very sour" as Kettle would have everyone believe. Four billion dollars a year is far more than anyone believes it would take to restore California's education, in spite of the rapid increase in the school-age population. It is just a question of getting the legislators to do what they were elected to do.

There is still a long way to go in eliminating waste, but there is no shortage of funds to do it. The elimination of the expensive and ineffective bilingual programmes will release additional funds for further all-round improvement.
Nicholas Barrau,
Northridge, California, USA

AMERICANS would benefit from having a growing number of bilingual youngsters (Bilingualism bites the dust in California, June 14). But language planning in education needs real commitment and high-quality teaching. If young Hispano-Americans have fallen between two linguistic stools, it is probably inadequate funding and a lack of conviction that are to blame.

In the week that Californians ended their 30-year experiment, an Institute of Welsh Affairs report (A Competitive Edge) found that Welsh-medium secondary schools in English-speaking South Wales score better than their English-medium equivalents on every measure, including the ratings for teaching English and modern languages.

Unlike Spanish, Welsh is not a world language. But applied with conviction, bilingual education could serve the United States melting pot as effectively as it does the emerging regions of Europe.
Eurof Thomas,
London

Briefly

THE Russian deputy prime minister has issued an appeal to the international community for $15 billion to stave off Russia's imminent economic collapse. Russia is quick, it seems, to plead for international co-operation.

Maybe Russia sees "co-operation" as a one-way street? Recently it hosted and conferred with the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, seen by many members of the international community as a war criminal. Why isn't Russia co-operating by turning over to the United Nations war criminals such as Milosevic — who apparently is still carrying on his purges and "ethnic cleansing"?
Kenny Hawley,
Vancouver, Canada

IN CRITICISING Adrian Lyne's film Lolita for allegedly distorting some of the broader themes of Nabokov's novel (May 17), Richard Williams merely displays the myopia of critics who demand mimetic versions of an original work and brook no attempts at expressionistic reinterpretation of its characters or plot.

Williams wants a Lolita free of what he calls the "shocking banality" of Lyne's sexual images and cleaving to the notions of judgment and punishment for sexual unorthodoxy. Faced with a choice between his version and Lyne's, I would choose Lyne's over one permeated with orthodoxy and didacticism, the ultimate banalities.
Gordon Sites,
Chiba City, Japan

AFTER the second world war the new nuclear energy industry in the United States was refused liability insurance by private companies. The US government took over the responsibility. Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, Dounreay etc. proved that the insurance companies were right. Which companies are insuring the genetic engineering pioneer Monsanto and its new owners, American Home Products — or is a $96 billion conglomerate able to provide its own liability insurance?
J P Cook,
Odense, Denmark

YOUR recent reports have used the French spelling Marseille (June 21), despite there being a long-established English usage, viz. Marseilles. I look forward to dispatches from Roma, Venezia, Lisboa, München, Genève, Milano, Wien, Napoli, Kobenhavn, Firenze, Köln, Antwerpen, Torino, Praha and divers places on the other side of the Channel — sorry, La Manche.
David Townsend,
Brentwood, Essex

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Bodies found in N Korea submarine

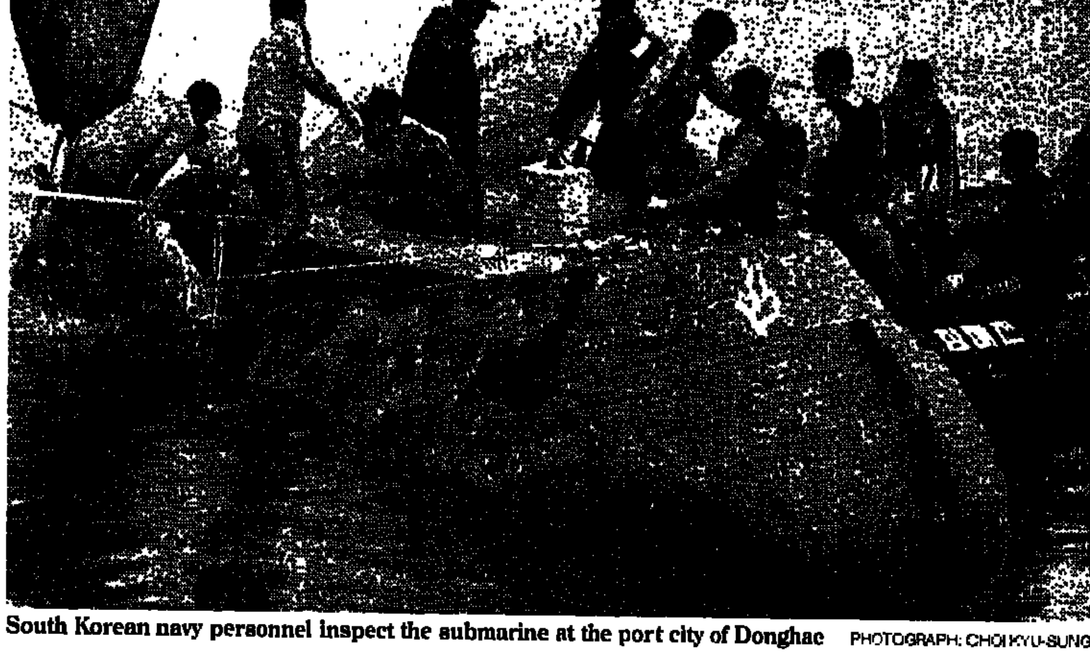
Agencies in Seoul and Donghae

SOUTH Korea said last week that nine crew members were found dead in a suspected North Korean submarine captured by the South Korean navy.

"[illegible] to have shot eight crew in their heads and then killed himself," said Major Kim Jung-woo, a spokesman for the joint chiefs of staff. Defence officials said North Korean infiltrators were trained to kill themselves to avoid capture.

The 30 metre sub had been discovered foundering with its propeller and periscope tangled in fishing nets. It was spotted by a fishing boat crew, 18km from Sokcho, a coastal town about 290km northeast of Seoul, and just south of the border between the two Koreas.

The vessel sank when a towing cable snapped as it was being hauled to a dockyard at Donghae, but was raised from the seabed. Warships combed the area where the sub was found, but no survivors have been reported.



South Korean navy personnel inspect the submarine at the port city of Donghae PHOTOGRAPH: CHOI KYU-SUNG

South Korea's president, Kim Dae-jung, said he would continue to maintain a flexible policy towards North Korea.

"As the intrusion into our territorial waters by a North Korean submarine shows, military tensions are continuing," Mr Kim said in a speech to war veterans on the 48th anniversary of a North Korean invasion that started the 1950-53 Korean war. A fraying truce ended the conflict, leaving the two sides technically still at war.

North Korea last Saturday blamed the South for the deaths of the nine crewmen and demanded the immediate return of the bodies and the sub. Earlier it had said the sub had been "wrecked" on a training mission and the fate of its crew was unknown.

The vessel was found close to where a much larger North Korean submarine ran aground in September 1996, triggering a 53-day hunt for its 26 occupants, 24 of whom died.

West warms to Nigeria's new regime

Ian Black, and agencies in Abuja

THE United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, arrived in Nigeria on Monday to meet the country's new military ruler, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, and encourage democratic reform and respect for human rights.

Mr Annan's visit is the clearest sign yet of foreign confidence in Gen Abubakar and his pledge to hold free elections and end the pariah status that Nigeria gained under dictator Sani Abacha, who died suddenly last month.

"I will do everything I can do to return Nigeria to democratic rule," Mr Annan said. "I have been much encouraged by my talks with General Abubakar."

Emeka Anyaoku, the secretary-general of the Commonwealth, which suspended Nigeria from its ranks in 1995 and imposed sanctions after the execution of nine Ogoni rights activists, arrived last weekend.

Chief Anyaoku, who is Nigerian, is to tell Gen Abubakar that the former colonials' club would take Nigeria back into the fold if he restored democratic rule and released all political prisoners. "An opportunity has emerged in Nigeria for dialogue and national reconciliation," Chief Anyaoku said.

Nigeria started to shed its pariah status last week when Britain and the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United States all rushed to engage with the country's new military ruler after he freed more political prisoners.

Gen Abubakar has already set free more than 30 of the political prisoners locked up under Abacha's rule, among them the former military ruler, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The next big step is seen as releasing the most prominent detainee, Moshood Abiola, who was arrested in 1994 for declaring himself president on the basis of annulled 1993 elections.

Tony Lloyd, a junior minister of the British Foreign Office, visited Nigeria last week to spearhead an EU drive to talk to the general after the transformation of the political landscape.

Gen Abubakar told Mr Lloyd he would do everything possible to end the world's "unfavourable view" of Nigeria. He also said he was pleased by "efforts by Britain and Nigeria to improve relations between the two traditional allies", a government statement said.

Mr Lloyd said he had asked for the release of Chief Abiola. Britain's position is that the Nigerian people must elect their ruler in fair and free elections.

Chief Abiola's name was conspicuously absent from the list of 17 detainees released last week and his supporters fear there have been attempts to persuade him to renounce his claim to the presidency.

Diplomats warned it would be difficult to strike the right note: "There will be a stream of VIPs flying in now and they all need to be sensitive," an African official said. "Any suggestion that the government is responding to external pressure will make a patriot out of every Nigerian . . . But on top of that there is an understanding that support has to be given to Abubakar by showing that there are paybacks when good things happen."

Opposition groups want a transitional government of national unity, and warn that international efforts must not give legitimacy to another military regime. "Visits that are not tied to benchmarks are no use and some of these visits have been arranged in a hasty manner," Kayode Fayemi of the Centre for Democracy and Development said. "Of course we welcome the releases, but Chief Abiola must be freed and there has to be recognition of what happened in 1993."

The US, which like the EU and the Commonwealth imposed limited sanctions on Abacha's regime, said it would send a high-level delegation to Abuja as soon as the government could meet it.

"We are investing a high-level effort because the stakes in Nigeria are enormous. A democratic Nigeria is key to a stable and prosperous West Africa, an invigorated African continent, and thus to US national interests and national security," President Clinton's Africa specialist, Susan Rice, said this week.

CIA to hire more spies after Indian lapse

Mark Tran in New York

THE Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is about to embark on the biggest spy recruitment drive in its history, in the wake of its failure to foresee India's nuclear tests.

This year the CIA's clandestine espionage arm, the Directorate of Operations, will begin hiring record numbers of case officers, or spies, as part of a plan to revitalise the United States' espionage capabilities by 2005.

The agency plans to hire more than five times as many spies as in 1995, the year of its lowest intake, with the number rising again next year. The exact number of spies is classified, but it is believed that around 1,000 case officers work in the directorate.

The CIA will also reopen several overseas offices that were shut in the early 1990s when Congress slashed its budget after the end of the cold war.

The reputation of the CIA, which was created under President Harry Truman 50 years ago, has been tarnished in recent years by scandals such as those involving double agents Aldrich Ames and Harold Nicolson, who both spied for Moscow.

But the biggest blow to its credibility came when the agency was completely blindsided by India's nuclear tests this year. The CIA director, George Tenet, said recently: "While the intelligence community has for years closely followed the Indian nuclear programme, there is no getting around the fact that we did not predict these particular Indian nuclear tests."

In May the CIA admitted that it had no agents who could have tipped off the US about India's intentions.

But this lapse might have a galvanising effect. Congress has now earmarked funds for the recruitment drive. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, made sure the agency secured more money. The CIA currently receives $26.7 billion.

The recruitment drive is seen as an acknowledgment that the CIA might have neglected traditional espionage, or human intelligence, in favour of hi-tech methods such as eavesdropping devices and spy satellites.

And new technologies such as encryption and computer networks have blunted the effectiveness of spy satellites and listening devices, forcing a return to more old-fashioned methods.

The agency has also suffered a brain drain of talented and mid-career officers since the end of the cold war, with many complaining about low morale and a heavy-handed bureaucracy. CIA officers have been embroiled in public accusations of spying from France and Germany among others. The agency believes that part of the problem is that its agents have failed to apply the basics of training.

The Week

ROAD crashes, which already claim 500,000 lives a year and cause 15 million injuries, will overtake tuberculosis, war and HIV as one of the world's biggest killers by 2020, according to the Red Cross.
Death duties, page 23

IVORY Coast confirmed that Alioune Blondin Beye, the United Nations special envoy in [illegible] plane crash near the capital, Abidjan. Beye was on a mission to African capitals to drum up support to avert further bloodshed in Angola.

THE Australian right's intense flirtation with the One Nation party in Queensland ended when an independent state MP in effect handed power to the Labor party, giving it the extra vote it needs to form a viable minority government.

THE Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, indicated for the first time that he has accepted the resignation of most of his cabinet — submitted nearly a year ago amid allegations of government corruption.

RESCUE teams in Ceyhan, Turkey, searched for survivors after an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale left at least 129 people dead and more than 1,500 injured.

AN ITALIAN judge has ordered the exhumation of Roberto Calvi's body 16 years after it was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge in London, to establish whether the Italian banker took his own life or was murdered.

THE Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches have edged closer to resolving a theological dispute — on "justification", or how one achieves salvation — that has divided them for nearly five centuries.

THE credibility of American journalism took a further battering when Time magazine published a letter from the managing editor announcing that he was investigating the accuracy of a recent story accusing US forces of using the deadly nerve gas sarin during the Vietnam war.

THE remains of the unknown US Vietnam war veteran who was interred in the Tomb of the Unknowns in Washington's Arlington national cemetery in 1984 have been positively identified as those of Lieutenant Michael Blassie of the US air force, who was shot down over South Vietnam in 1972.

GOVERNMENT troops in Yemen clashed over several days with tribesmen protesting against price increases on fuels, leaving 52 people dead and 214 injured.

Serbs fight to retake key Kosovo mine

Jonathan Steele in Pristina and Ian Black in London

SERBIAN forces claimed on Monday to have recaptured part of a strategic coal mine vital to Kosovo's power supply from ethnic Albanian gunmen who seized it last week.

Serbian sources said police used tear-gas to take control of the management complex at the Belecevac mine, 10km west of the disputed provincial capital, Pristina. Yugoslav army units were also involved in the operation to dislodge the Albanians.

The loss was not confirmed by ethnic Albanian sources, who accused the Serbs of attacking Albanian-populated villages around the mine. Reporters said a large force of police backed by armoured vehicles moved into the mining complex early on Monday and that detonations and gunfire could be heard during the day. At least three houses burned in the neighbouring village of Ade.

The Serbian media centre said there were no casualties, but with signs of international confusion about how to handle the Kosovo crisis diplomats fear that if fighting intensifies it could cause a flare-up in the many regions of the province where the two sides are at a stand-off over demands by the ethnic Albanians who dominate Kosovo for independence from Serbia.

Monday's operation started two hours after dawn when police with armoured personnel carriers sealed off the road to Belecevac. The Yugoslav army has a large base barely 300 metres from the management buildings.

The surprise was that the security forces had not acted against the lightly armed insurgents of the Kosovo Liberation Army several days earlier. The Albanians themselves were expecting a counter-attack after they brought the mine to a halt last week by kidnapping nine Serbian mineworkers.

After this the rest of the 1,700-member workforce stayed at home.

Belecevac supplies coal for two power plants that provide electricity for the province of Kosovo and the rest of the national grid in Serbia.

Christopher Hill, the United States ambassador in Macedonia who deputises for Richard Holbrooke, the main American troubleshooter on Kosovo, renewed US efforts to broker a ceasefire on Monday. He was to meet President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade and then fly to Pristina to meet a Kosovo Albanian negotiating team.

Veton Surroi, a member of the Kosovo negotiating team, warned that the situation threatened to spiral out of control: "If this police and military attack at Belecevac continues it will create a military response by the KLA in other areas that could make it impossible to reach any kind of negotiated solution in Kosovo."

In Luxembourg, meanwhile, European Union foreign ministers appeared divided over US suggestions that the KLA — dismissed until recently as a terrorist organisation — should take part in peace talks with Belgrade.

The UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, chairing the last ministerial meeting to be held during Britain's presidency of the EU, said talks must include "those who represent all shades of Kosovo opinion".

Last week, Nato gave its strongest signal yet that it would not back independence for Kosovo, insisting that a political solution must be found to end the bloodshed.

● United Nations and Dutch authorities were conducting a security inquiry on Monday after a Serb accused of playing a key role in the massacre of 200 mainly Croatian hospital patients outside Vukovar in 1991 hanged himself while awaiting the verdict of the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in the Hague. Slavko Dokmanovic was a former mayor of Vukovar.

Le Monde, page 14

Indonesian agents shoot Dili protester

John Aglionby in Jakarta

INDONESIAN intelligence agents shadowing a European Union troika of ambassadors around East Timor shot dead one man and injured four people when a crowd attacked their vehicle on Monday.

The agents, who had accompanied the diplomats from the East Timorese capital, Dili, to Baucau, were set upon outside the town's St Antonio Cathedral by 800 people who had gathered to welcome the diplomats, led by the British ambassador to Indonesia, Robin Christopher.

Incensed by the six officers openly attempting to carry arms into the cathedral grounds, where the diplomats were meeting the bishop of Baucau, Basilio dos Nasciemento, people jumped on the van and pelted it with stones.

The incident followed demonstrations last weekend in Dili by thousands of protesters in an attempt to show the EU ambassadors the extent of opposition to Indonesian rule.

Last Saturday rival protesters, pro-independence and pro-Indonesia, clashed in front of a church in Manatutu, about 65km east of Dili, where the funeral was taking place of a man shot by Indonesian troops earlier that day.

Soon after the clash at the funeral thousands of pro-independence demonstrators confronted troops outside the office in Dili of the Indonesian governor, Abilio Soares, who was meeting the British, Dutch and Austrian envoys inside.

Mr Christopher said the EU delegation was in the former Portuguese colony "to assess the situation after the recent changes. We are here to do whatever we can to support the United Nations process of a dialogue . . . I will let the UN know what I have seen."

UN-sponsored talks between Portugal and Indonesia, which invaded the territory in 1975 and annexed it the following year, have made little progress in the search for a permanent solution to the issue of the territory's sovereignty.

Last month Indonesia's new president, B J Habibie, offered East Timor "special status". He later offered to reduce the Indonesian military presence.

Thousands of East Timorese protest in Dili last week against Indonesian rule PHOTOGRAPH: SUPRI

US boycott threat to Swiss banks

Mark Tran in New York

THE threat of a boycott of Swiss banks by a range of American local and state governments was revived on Monday night after the World Jewish Congress gave the green light to such action over the issue of restitution for Holocaust survivors whose families lost assets deposited in Switzerland before and during the second world war.

The World Jewish Congress president, Edgar Bronfman, planned to tell a steering committee of state and local American finance officials scheduled to meet in New York this week that his organisation will not oppose their threatened boycott. The body is a key negotiator in compensation talks between Jewish groups and Swiss banks.

The hardening of positions among Jewish groups follows a public offer of a maximum of $600 million from the three big Swiss banks last week. They were hoping to forestall what could be a protracted and damaging legal battle. But Jewish groups are demanding payment of $1.5 billion from Swiss banks for failing to return assets deposited by Jews. They dismissed the offer from Crédit Suisse, Swiss Bank and Union Bank of Switzerland as "outrageous" and "insulting".

The Swiss, for their part say that the figures emerging from a range of Jewish groups are seriously inflated.

The US committee of local and state officials, led by the New York City comptroller, Alan Hevesi, will decide — after hearing testimony from Jewish groups, the state department and Swiss banks— whether to lift its moratorium on sanctions against the banks. It held off sanctions while compensation talks were proceeding.

The five-member steering committee represents 800 state and local government financial officials in the US who decide on such issues as where to invest pension funds and where to deposit state accounts.

The moratorium came into effect during the settlement talks that began in April under the auspices of a US under-secretary of state, Stuart Eizenstat. Negotiations broke down last week after the Swiss banks went public with their offer. A round of talks scheduled for last week was called off as the sides became increasingly polarised.

A boycott would come as a severe blow to the Swiss banks as they try to establish themselves in the US as part of their campaign to become global financial powers.

They are already finding it difficult to crack the US market. Several European banks have had to retrench because of the high costs of doing business in the US.

Berbers angry at murder of radical singer

Abdelmalik Touati in Tizi Ouzou and Victoria Brittain

THE Berber-speaking mountain area of northern Algeria erupted in violence last week after the assassination of Matoub Lounès, a radical singer who had lived in France for ... years for his own safety.

Matoub was a staunch anti-Islamist, outspoken supporter of the Berber cause and democrat whose songs often criticised Algerian officialdom.

The murder of the popular champion of the Berber language came as the government prepares to impose classical Arabic as the language of the media and all public meetings.

Secular Algeria, not only the Berbers but the francophone intellectual class, is enraged by this concession to moderate Muslims. The government is trying to detach the moderates from the Islamist rebels who have been fighting a civil war since 1992.

Security forces said Matoub, aged 42, had been shot by a "terrorist group" — the official code for Muslim rebels — at a fake roadblock. His wife and two sisters-in-law were wounded.

In northern Algeria riot police were deployed, tear gas was fired and helicopters hovered overhead as thousands of Berbers converged on the town of Tizi Ouzou, a centre of opposition to both the government and the Islamist groups.

As anger at Matoub's murder swept through the town, youths smashed the windows of banks, government offices and shops. Witnesses reported looting, and one said the local agency of the state airline, Air Algerie, had been set on fire.

"It is not the Islamists who killed him," shouted one youth as others smashed a mailbox and scattered letters. Young men wrecked lampposts and traffic lights.

"Zeroual, assassin!" one group chanted, blaming President Lamine Zeroual for the murder. "A lot of his songs were critical of the government," said a young woman.

But Matoub Malika, the singer's sister, blamed the Islamists, who kidnapped him in 1994 and repeatedly threatened his life. She said: "He has left his songs which will speak for him, and he is immortal. So these GIA Islamist bastards, wherever they are, will never be able to kill him."

Senegal turns back Guinea Bissau refugees

Alex Duval Smith in Ziguinchor

TENS of thousands of people are facing starvation and disease as they flee fighting in Guinea Bissau because soldiers guarding Senegal's border are turning them away and preventing aid from entering Guinea Bissau.

The move by Senegal, whose troops are struggling to contain an army rebellion centred on Bissau, the capital of Guinea Bissau, flies in the face of international calls to avert a refugee crisis.

Of Guinea Bissau's 1 million population, up to 250,000 are estimated to be displaced, roaming the countryside as the start of the rainy season brings a heightened risk of cholera and malaria. Most of them have gathered along Senegal's border with the former Portuguese colony, one of Africa's poorest countries.

Only a handful of refugees have reached Ziguinchor, Senegal's main border town. They are mostly Senegalese or Gambian and tell of ugly scenes as Guinea Bissauans are turned away from border crossings at gunpoint. Rahilou Aidara, a Senegalese woman aged 75, arrived in Ziguinchor last week after walking 160km from Bissau. She said: "The Senegalese soldiers are only letting women and children through. Anyone who cannot give an address in Senegal is turned away."

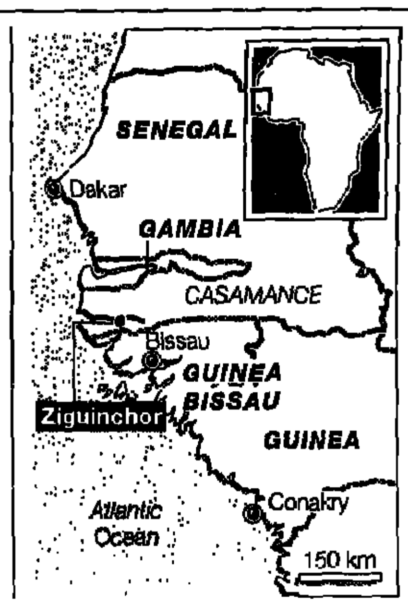
The Senegalese army command in Dakar denies that the border has been sealed. Commanders in southern Senegal, a province known as Casamance, say their orders come from the capital.

The rebellion in Guinea Bissau, led by a former independence fighter, Brigadier Ansumane Mane, began on June 7. He had been sacked as armed forces chief amid allegations from the president, João Bernardo Vieira, that 13 leading military figures were selling arms to rebels in Casamance, a wealthy province of cannabis-growing and tourism that began a fight for independence 16 years ago.

Its rebels have stepped up their campaign, using landmines thought to have come from Guinea Bissau. About 90 deaths have been caused by landmines since last November.

Immediately after the Guinea Bissau rebellion began, Senegal's president, Abdou Diouf, ordered 1,300 troops into the country, whose president is a close ally. These have been reinforced as the entire Guinea Bissauan army, thought to number 3,500, has defected to the rebel side.

A missionary in Casamance said: "We believe there are up to 100,000 refugees at Bafatá, a further 100,000 at Mansoa, as well as . . . 5,000 to 30,000 at crossroads and villages all along the northwestern border."





Spain builds fences to stop influx

Adela Gooch in Madrid

SPAIN is building 4m-high fences to stop illegal immigrants entering its North African enclave city, Melilla, and using it as a passage point to Europe.

Construction has begun on two fences along Melilla's 10-km border with Morocco, which will be patrolled by Spain's paramilitary civil guard. The fences, which should be finished by the end of the year, will cost about $10 million and will be dotted with sensors, cameras and control towers.

Spain has been forced to step up immigration controls since it signed the Schengen treaty that guarantees free passage between signatory European Union countries. The new fences will replace the ragged barbed wire that did little to keep immigrants out. Melilla, with its sister city, Ceuta, attracts thousands of would-be immigrants from across Africa.

A flourishing trade has grown up showing them how to sneak under the wire and providing them with passage in planes or ships travelling to Málaga or Almeria.

About 2,000 people are thought to have died since 1990 crossing the straits of Gibraltar, one of the most dangerous channels in the world, and 20,000 have been arrested.

The civil guard admit they are swamped by immigrants trying to make it over a stretch of water that has become Europe's Rio Grande, the river that runs along the border between Mexico and the United States.

Last year the Spanish army was deployed in Melilla to help the civil guard after riots broke out among immigrants at a reception camp on the city's outskirts. The Spanish interior ministry says the new fences will allow the troops to withdraw.

The immigration issue is a cause of tension with Morocco, which refuses to accept non-Moroccan immigrants deported from Ceuta and Melilla. Morocco lays claim to both enclaves, which were established as city fortresses after the expulsion of the Moors from Spain 500 years ago.

● The former Socialist prime minister of Spain, Felipe González, said under oath last week that when in power he did not authorise the dirty war against the Basque separatist group ETA, and that he knew nothing about it.

Global economy can't bank on euro

EUROPE THIS WEEK
Martin Walker

PRESIDENT Clinton's trip to China recalls Metternich's definition of a Great Power as one that is treated as such by other Great Powers. By that standard, Europe remains an international lightweight, even in financial matters where it thinks it deserves better.

At the height of the Japanese financial crisis last month, when the yen was tumbling and the Chinese were threatening to devalue their currency unless the rot could be stopped, the United States Treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, acted like a Great Power of finance. He arranged with the Bank of Japan a sudden and powerful intervention in the financial markets. The US and Japan jointly bought yen to stabilise both the currency and the reeling international system, and to buy time for Japanese reforms to restore confidence.

The Europeans, despite their gleaming new central bank and embryonic new single currency, along with their share of world output and world trade which exceed those of the US, were not part of the rescue. Indeed, the financial affairs commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, told the European Parliament last week that "the joint intervention by the US and Japanese authorities to support the yen took place without Europe even being informed".

So a very large hole has suddenly appeared in the fundamental concept of the single currency. In order to convince the markets that it will be a sound currency, the Maastricht treaty insists that it be run by independent central bankers, without interference by politicians — a good way to run a currency but not so clever if the euro wants to play a responsible role in global financial stewardship and crisis management.

Rubin can do this because he has the political authority to take big decisions with billions of dollars of his country's money, and a staff that can keep secrets and which is skilled in running the world's financial system. In addition, he has credibility in the markets. Europe has no such figure, and the single currency has no plan to appoint one.

Given the ambitions of the euro to become a rival to the dollar as an international reserve currency, and given the sheer economic weight of the European Union, Europeans may have to come up with some kind of solution. It will not be enough to leave matters to Wim Duisenberg, head of the central bank. There is nothing in his mandate that says he can risk billions of euros in trying to stabilise a plunging yen and preserve the world from a financial crisis.

There are two bodies that could take a stab at the job. The first is Ecofin, the monthly gathering of the EU's 15 finance ministers. They have few staff, with little experience of crisis management. And it is not easy to get all 15 ministers together to take big decisions. On top of that the difficulty of getting a committee of 15 to take swift, decisive action hardly needs to be emphasised.

The current system under which each EU member state holds the Presidency of the European Council temporarily and thus chairs the meetings of Ecofin, is unsatisfactory because four EU members are not in the euro zone. Moreover, the six-month stints by small countries such as Luxembourg, Greece and Portugal carry little international weight or credibility.

Then there is the euro-XI, the informal club of the 11 finance ministers in the euro zone. They do not have any staff. And even if the big three — the French, German and Italian finance ministers — agree to intervene in a global crisis, there are eight others to be cajoled into taking the kind of risk that can end a politician's career.

The European Commission has accordingly called for the appointment of a central political authority to act as a counterpart to the US Treasury secretary: "Europe has not played a political role to match its weight on the world's economic and financial scene. To benefit from the coming of the euro, a satisfactory solution has got to be be found to this question of external representation of the euro zone," De Silguy said in the EU's first formal statement on the Japanese financial crisis.

His speech brought into the open a problem that has been simmering for months. It explains much of the political infighting over the role of the euro-XI group, from which Britain is excluded.

Britain has long feared that its privileged role at the top tables in the G8 and the International Monetary Fund could be undermined by the euro-XI group, and has accordingly fought hard to weaken its role. The appointment of a "Mr Euro", sharing the responsibility for global financial management with the US Treasury, would emphasise the political costs to Britain of remaining outside the single currency.

The "external representation" of the euro, as the Maastricht treaty calls it, will be a crucial role. It will entail speaking at the G8 and IMF meetings and in international crises for the only economic and monetary block big enough to be a counterweight to the dollar. Because it is so important, the individual euro zone members, the EU Commission and the European Central Bank are all loathe to entrust such a starring role to any of the others.

Despite the lessons of co-ordination learned by US and European central bankers and the IMF over the past 20 years, the governments involved in the euro have failed to address the challenge. This seems unwise. The Asian crisis is not over, and the Russian crisis rumbles on. Each one threatens to spill over into other emergent markets, from eastern Europe to Latin America.

For the foreseeable future, habit and convenience mean that the US will probably fill the leadership vacuum and the EU will continue to play the curious double role of economic giant and political dwarf. This is not healthy, and probably cannot last because of the scale of the problem. The world's currency markets routinely trade more than $1,200 billion in the course of a working day. In other words they trade in a week as much wealth as the US economy produces in a year. In markets of this scale US crisis management and readiness to intervene needs all the credibility and big-gun support it can get. It is thus in Washington's interest to encourage Europe to develop a counterpart for its own Treasury secretary, in order to share the burden of responsibility.

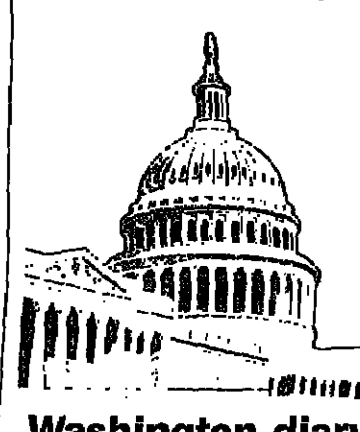
● Britain agreed a crash programme with European Commission and Parliament officials last week to restore full legal authority for the EU's suspended budget of $600 million for "good works".

Finance, page 19



Sleeping partner . . . it was the United States that co-ordinated the rescue of the yen and thus stabilised the international markets last month. Europe was excluded
PHOTOGRAPH: SUSUMU TAKAHASHI

Americans are not so cocky after all



Washington diary
Martin Kettle

"I AM going to China," President Clinton said as he left Washington for Beijing last week, "to learn more about the country and its people and to explain to them about America and the things that Americans believe in."

From some heads of state such an aspiration would have sounded faintly presumptuous, perhaps even absurd. But not from an American president, and certainly not to many American ears. No one with much exposure to Americans can be in any doubt that most citizens of the United States are genuinely proud of their country and its values, and are keen to proclaim these around the world.

They also believe that America is better than other nations, and perhaps even that Americans are better than other people. "This is the greatest nation in the world" is a commonly used piece of political rhetoric.

This sort of belief, even though not universally held, sets the US apart from most other nations. No German politician would say that Germany is the greatest nation in the world. A British, French or Israeli politician might say it; but even in those countries the claim would strike many people as dubious, even dangerous.

One has become used, in a world dominated by US political, economic and cultural success, to the notion that America is Top Nation — and knows it. So it comes as a real and instructive corrective to read a study this week by the University of Chicago's national opinion research centre which provides a much more subtle picture of what US citizens think.

The study finds — and it's no surprise — that Americans are proud of their nation. But it does not find that they are uniquely proud of themselves, or even that they are the nation with the most "general pride" in the world. That accolade goes to Austria.

The Chicago researchers looked at 22 different nationalities, though in the case of Germany they treated the former divided halves separately. Of the 22 countries, 17 were European; the others were the US, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the Philippines. They surveyed each nationality's pride in 10 specific areas: democracy, political influence, economic achievements, social security, achievements in science, sports and the arts, the armed forces, history, and fair and equal treatment of all groups in society. In all, the researchers interviewed 28,000 people.

Americans were the proudest nation in four of these categories — political influence, economic achievement, science and technology, and the armed forces. In all of these cases it is not hard to see why this might be. But it is striking that although they scored high marks in most of the other categories Americans were "out-prided" by other nations in every one of them. Their lowest ranking was for pride in the US social security system, where Americans came ninth.

In each country the citizens were asked about their support of various nationalistic and patriotic sentiments. These results, in particular, give a much more contoured picture of national pride than the usual stereotypes. As expected, 90 per cent of Americans say they would rather be citizens of their own country than of any other. But what is surprising is that these figures are matched (though not exceeded) in several other nations: among those with 80 per cent or better rates were Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines and Poland. The Netherlands came bottom with 48 per cent.

Similarly, 80 per cent of Americans agreed that theirs "is a better country than most other countries" — though this score was similar in New Zealand (77 per cent), Canada (78 per cent) and Japan (83 per cent).

On the other hand, the 18 per cent of Americans who agree that there are some things about their country that make them "ashamed" puts the US somewhere in the middle of a league headed by Spain (44 per cent) and the Netherlands (41 per cent). Russia (6 per cent) and Sweden (8 per cent) were unashamedly at the bottom

The 31 per cent of Americans who say that they support the US even when it is "wrong" fall between nationalistic Bulgaria (62 per cent), Hungary (58 per cent) and Russia (55 per cent) on the one hand, and the independent-minded Netherlands (12 per cent), Canada (15 per cent) and West Germany (16 per cent) on the other.

The Chicago survey suggests that Americans, while extremely proud of their nation, its prowess and its achievements, are by no means un-self-critical. Americans, whose country is more powerful and influential than most others, are by no means as pig-headed about themselves as some who flatter themselves about their broad-mindedness. At their best, which is often, a remarkably large number of Americans are extremely eager to learn about other nations and remarkably anxious to please. A bit like Bill Clinton in China, in fact.

Mexico's rebels gear up for high noon

Michael McCaughan
In San Cristóbal de las Casas

THE Zapatista community of Siete de Enero (7th January) celebrated Mother's Day in style this year, with biscuits, fizzy drinks, football and song. The children transformed discarded cardboard boxes into war shields, then surf boards, while others improvised kites from plastic bags and pieces of string. And they flew.

The children's creativity mirrored the imagination of their parents, who have fashioned a revolution out of trees, hunting rifles, a trickle of non-governmental aid and a huge amount of nerve. For the 60 young men and women who rose up in 1994 and occupied the estates of wealthy ranchers, this is the land of milk and honey — or at least of mango and pineapple.

Their new home boasts a river, a football pitch, a health promoter and, for the moment, a tense peace. If they can steal electricity from the highway as planned and pipe water from a nearby spring, they will settle down happily for the rest of their lives. The villagers still curse "bad government", but they are quietly satisfied with their new autonomous village council, elected each year.

Siete is one of dozens of new villages that have sprouted across Chiapas, in southeastern Mexico, on farms abandoned by ranchers after the Zapatista rebellion. The new villages provide food to the rebel army and pay a war-tax on the occasional windfall from coffee or timber sales.

Most of the young men, and some of the women, trained in the hills with the Zapatistas and form part of a reserve force ready to aid the insurgents should war restart.

The new village is one of 56 communities forming the "17th of November" autonomous district, which in turn feeds into a 32-district regional autonomy project. The small liberated enclaves are surrounded by 60,000 Mexican troops, police and paramilitaries.

The state governor, Roberto Albores Guillen, the third governor elected by nobody since the 1994 uprising, has described the autonomous districts as "the greatest threat to democracy" in Mexico and pledged to dismantle them one by one. He is a man of his word. Taniperlas, Tierra y Libertad and San Juan Libertad are in embers, the result of a campaign that has left a dozen people dead, more than 100 jailed, and 12 foreigners expelled.

Beyond Siete, across a deep river, 31 families established Panclio Villa, displacing Luis Urbina, a wealthy landowner. The airstrip that used to ferry guests to his elegant hacienda is dotted with wooden shacks, while his home is the local school.

Every rebel village has a shortwave radio, operated round the clock, that feeds into a regional network tracking army movements, stray farm animals and gossip. The villagers' only contact with the outside world is an occasional trip to a charity hospital in Altamirano, where they sell a few kilos of coffee or corn to pay for sugar, soap and salt.

A cloak of mist and drizzle casts a shroud around the distant hills, where Zapatista insurgents watch silently over their brothers and sisters below. Weapons and radios have been spirited into the hills during the past six months as the rebels build for peace but prepare for war.

The government has sent army reconnaissance flights and a barrage of radio propaganda. The rebels combat the propaganda with a mobile information unit. The local Zapatista commander set off one morning in May with a truck, television, video and generator and stopped at a prearranged spot where men and a donkey carried the gear up the hills.

The Lucio Cabañas community gathered in the local church to watch a documentary showing women and children routing Mexican soldiers from their village. The local women strained to hear every insult, as hoots of laughter resounded in the church. Another documentary showed mass mobilisations in Mexico City after the Acteal massacre, while the last film was about women discussing their reasons for joining the Zapatistas.

The 200 peasant farmers in Lucio Cabañas never owned land before the Zapatista uprising, and seem bewildered by the fulfilment of a centuries-old dream. Their ancestors, like themselves, worked on Pepe Castellanos's land. The day's labour is still a rough physical challenge, but at least the fruits belong to them.

Women's rights are guaranteed, no government aid is accepted, alcohol is banned and voter abstention is the policy at election time — in theory. In practice, tradition, common sense and expediency prevail. In 1996 the Morelia district rejected the rebel leadership's call for abstention and voted in a sympathetic candidate as mayor of Altamirano, a rancher stronghold that never had an opposition candidate before 1994.

"We have our autonomous structures firing ahead here," says Commander Ramón, gesturing at Morelia's community centre with soup kitchen, meeting hall, dormitory, library, vegetable garden and even a photographic darkroom. "But why not beat the government on their own territory when we can?" he adds.

The Zapatistas say they accept compromises that do not betray the original goals of the uprising — the betterment of the Chiapas Indian communities and the struggle for democracy in Mexico.

Traditional community punishments include flogging and, in extreme cases, banishment. The new villages have shifted the emphasis to "useful" punishment, such as clearing land for production.

The government insists that the Zapatistas have changed nothing since January 1994, further impoverishing the people they claim to support. On the ground, however, there is a new confidence among the Indian people. Indian men and women used to walk with heads bowed; now they look you in the eye and discuss world politics. "Sometimes we go to bed with a sore head from thinking so much," one villager said after a lengthy discussion on the Irish peace process.

Governor Guillen got it right when he described the Zapatista autonomy project as "the greatest threat to democracy" in Mexico. The rudimentary rebel project exposes 70 years of misrule by Mexico's PRI party and inspires similar resistance around the country.

The Zapatistas' cardboard surfboards and flimsy shacks may be razed by tanks and bombs but the people say that they will rebuild somewhere else, using banana leaves for shelter and eating berries if necessary, never asking permission to govern their own affairs.

El Salvador army officer 'ordered murder of US nuns'

Larry Rohter in Miami

EL SALVADOR'S defence minister suspected that a member of his high command had ordered the murder of four United States churchwomen in 1980 and informed the US ambassador of his belief, newly released state department documents show.

For years both governments have asserted that no high-ranking military officials were involved in the killings, which provoked an intense debate about US policy in Central America. The declassified documents raise questions about Washington's motives for not investigating the information more aggressively.

Three Roman Catholic nuns, Maura Clarke, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel, and a lay worker, Jean Donovan, were abducted by a military unit on December 2, 1980. They were raped and shot. At the time the US was beginning a decade-long effort to prevent leftwing guerrillas from seizing power, and the case symbolised the pitfalls of US involvement in the region.

The defence minister, General José Guillermo García, confided his suspicions to Thomas Pickering, who was then the US ambassador to El Salvador and is now under-secretary of state for political affairs. It is not clear from the documents what action, if any, the state department took to investigate the leads passed on by Mr Pickering.

"I think someone should be called on the carpet for this," said Robert White, the US ambassador at the time of the killings. He was replaced by Mr Pickering soon afterwards.

Mr White made it clear he was not referring to his successor. "What has been released moves toward confirming what most of us have always believed, that this was ordered by higher-ups," he said.

In 1984 four members of the Salvadorean national guard and their immediate superior were convicted of the murders and sentenced to 30 years in prison. In March the enlisted men broke their 17-year silence and told US human rights investigators they had acted only after receiving clear and explicit "orders from above".

The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, ordered the release of relevant documents after requests by members of Congress and the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, which represents the churchwomen's families and which interviewed the guard members.

Throughout the 12-year civil war, in which 75,000 people were killed, the Reagan and Bush administrations always echoed the Salvadorean government's contention that the murders were the work of a small group acting on its own. The documents make it clear that Washington apparently chose to ignore strong indications to the contrary from the US embassy in San Salvador. — *New York Times*

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Blair's U-turn gives car-owners a boost

THE VOTERS of Middle England won another victory last week when the Prime Minister abandoned tough plans to penalise motorists for multiple car ownership and excessive use of their large vehicles. Although firm plans had not been drawn up, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who has overall responsibility for transport, was in no doubt that a forthcoming white paper would curb private car use and promote better public transport.

It had been suggested that motorists would be required to pay congestion charges — between £2 and £10 a day — to finance public transport in their areas; that charges should be levied for road use on routes into city centres; and that the Government would act to regulate privatised bus and rail services. These ideas had attracted wide public support, though not from the motoring lobbies.

Now, it seems, nothing much will happen. "High-earning car-owners need have no fear of the white paper," said the Transport Minister, Gavin Strang. "There is no question of our discouraging car ownership. We want to reduce car dependency and usage."

Environmental groups and public transport supporters described the Government's decision as a lame retreat. Mr Prescott's white paper had already been delayed by several months because of a long-running and seemingly unsuccessful battle to persuade the Treasury to fund public transport projects. There will now be no time for MPs to debate it before the summer recess.

AN IRA MAN who transported the London Docklands bomb that killed two men and caused £150 million of damage was jailed for 25 years at Woolwich crown court in south London, but could be free within two years as part of the Good Friday peace agreement in Northern Ireland.

Murder charges against James McArdle, a 29-year-old bricklayer from Co Armagh, were abandoned because of what Mr Justice Kay described as "flagrant contempt" by the Sun newspaper. The Attorney-General will now consider whether to prosecute the paper for publishing details that were not known to the jury.

McArdle's sentence was for conspiring to cause explosions but he knew all along that any penalty imposed on him would in many ways be meaningless. It had already been decided, as part of the political settlement in Northern Ireland, that those serving sentences for terrorist offences would serve only a tiny portion of their time if the organisation to which they belonged signed up to the settlement and its attendant ceasefire.

THE LORD Chancellor, Lord Irvine, declared war on his own profession when he insisted that solicitors should be given the same rights as barristers to conduct cases in the higher courts. This means that litigants and defendants will no longer have to hire two lawyers to handle their case.

Lord Irvine's predecessor, Lord Mackay, tried to enforce similar changes but had to back down in the face of protests from the Bar. This resulted in a cumbersome compromise that allowed a committee of four senior judges to decide which non-barristers should and should not be allowed to appear in the higher courts. This committee is now to be abolished.

Besides reducing costs for members of the public, the change will also mean that organisations such as the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office, government departments, local councils and companies will have the right to argue their own cases in the higher courts.

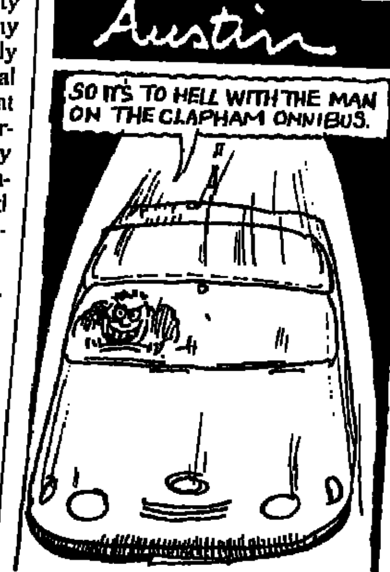
THE BBC gave air time to Earl Spencer to talk aloud about his late sister Diana, Princess of Wales. Since he hadn't got much of anything new to say, it was not unreasonable to suppose that the broadcast was timed to promote the opening to the public of the Spencer estate, Althorp, where the first pilgrims will be able to pay their respects to the princess, who is buried on an island in the middle of an ornamental lake.

Wasn't he just creating a tourist "Graceland?" asked his interviewer, Sally Magnusson. The earl admitted that visitors would be charged £9.50 to visit the Diana museum in an old stable block and that only 10 per cent of the proceeds would go to charity, the rest going to pay off his huge overdraft.

Later some 15,000 people paid £39.50 a head to attend a Diana charity concert at Althorp and stuck it out through pouring rain to listen to performances from, among others, Chris de Burgh, David Hasselhoff and Sir Cliff Richard.

But residents of London's most fashionable borough responded with fury to proposals for a memorial garden commemorating Diana in Kensington Gardens, scene of widespread public grieving following her death. They are to be consulted about the £10 million scheme, but fear it will go ahead regardless.

Meanwhile parliament could sit on a Saturday to ensure that legislation ratifying the landmine ban, championed by Diana, is passed before the first anniversary of her death on August 31. The Government had originally said it had no available parliamentary time.





Rain stops play . . . Two mud-soaked festival-goers abandon a game of football at Glastonbury. The s[un] was shining by the end of the three-day music festival but it came too late to save much of the carni[val] spirit from drowning. Thousands left the Somerset site early after two days of heavy rain PHOTO: BENOI[T]

GPs agree health service reform

David Brindle

FAMILY doctors last week voted to co-operate with the Government's health service reforms, but warned that the timetable is unrealistic and that debts of some £200 million must be wiped out.

The decision by the annual conference of local medical committees, representing GPs, will come as a relief to ministers who had feared an embarrassing clash would mar celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the national health service on July 5.

However, debate at the conference revealed strong pockets of continuing opposition to the reforms — by which GPs will gradually take over the commissioning of health care — despite concessions by Alan Milburn, the health minister.

Dr Martin Harris, from Barnet in north London, warned: "We are the ones who are going to be blamed when we cannot deliver the services to patients."

The British Medical Association had threatened to ballot GPs on non-co-operation with the reforms, due to take effect next April. But its negotiators were won round by Mr Milburn's concessions, which guarantee and index-link funding for surgery premises, computers and staff costs, and also give GPs the option of a majority on the boards of "primary care groups" (PCGs) which will replace fundholding doctors and the commissioning role of health authorities.

Dr Jonathon Reggler, from Buckinghamshire, warned that doctors were being duped into responsibility for rationing. People who wanted comprehensive health care would go private and the PCGs would be left providing a rump service for t[he] poor.

But Dr Richard Vautrey, [from] Leeds, said GPs who opposed [the re]forms would look "as archaic [and] out of touch with reality" as doct[ors] who opposed the NHS had [ap]peared in 1948.

The conference voted again[st a] national ballot, and for the neg[otia]tors' recommendations, but did [sup]port resolutions condemning [the] Government's timetable as unre[alis]tic and warning that PCGs mus[t] inherit the debts of health au[thori]ties and fundholders.

Debts of authorities in Eng[land] alone are said to be some £170 [mil]lion. However, the comprehen[sive] spending review this month is [ex]pected to produce extra cash for [the] NHS — some of which could b[e] used to write off or at least cush[ion] the worst local deficits.

Clash over vitamin curb

David Hencke

GOVERNMENT plans to limit drastically the sale of vitamin B6, which is used by 2 million women every day to combat pre-menstrual tension, must be scrapped, an authoritative MPs' committee demanded last week.

The verdict from the Commons Agriculture Select Committee is a damaging blow to ministers whose proposal has already led to supermarkets and chemist chains withdrawing up to 500 health products containing the vitamin from the shelves.

MPs have received more than 110,000 letters of protest: the largest critical postbag since the row over beef on the bone.

The MPs' findings were based on the latest American research, which points to symptoms such as tingling, numbness and clumsiness associated with long-term doses of 500mg or above.

The MPs said there should be a voluntary limit of 100mg a day and clear health warnings on the bottles.

Doctor set to challenge surgeons' 'closed shop'

Sarah Boseley

A BRITISH anaesthetist who qualified as a consultant in the United States is taking unprecedented legal action against the medical authorities in the UK who say he cannot have the same status in Britain without further training.

The case will be seen as a challenge to the last and strongest bastion of the medical establishment.

Dr Richard Kaul's battle is a first. Few doctors appeal against the traditional practices of the medical Royal Colleges that govern the specialities. Dr Kaul has demanded an unprecedented full public hearing before a judge. He says it is a matter of principle.

His solicitor, Oliver Mays, of Le Brasseur J Tickle, said his client wanted to challenge "the whole rationale for [the Royal College] coming to their unilateral, arbitrary decision — whether their reasons were fair and what was the basis of their assessment".

The Royal Colleges are prestigious associations that represent medical specialities, set standards and look into issues and new treatments. They have been unchallenged f[or] centuries because the leading me[n] in each field dominate them.

But the Bristol heart babies case that ended recently with the disc[i]plining of three top doctors raised questions about the colleges' clubby nature. No warning bells were sounded by them.

Dr Kaul spent five years a[t] medical school in London and [a] year as a house officer before mov[-]ing to the US. He spent seven years there, in training all the time, and qualified as a consultant anaesthetist.

He returned to Britain in 1995 and began working at the Bristol Royal Infirmary in chronic pain relief. He said he found the hospital "in a time warp" and got no backing when he wanted to apply for the equivalent status of his consultant rank in the US. He was told he must do more than a year's further training.

Dr Kaul says he has found him[-]self in the same position as many hospital doctors from the India[n] subcontinent, who are not allowed consultant status because they have not done all their training in the UK.

In Brief

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE county council has apologised for the first time for the "pain and anguish" caused to adults with learning disabilities by its failure to close down two nursing homes where residents endured a regime of systematic abuse.

LORD NEILL, the barrister appointed by Tony Blair to clean up political corruption, pulled out of representing the former Tory leader of Westminster council, Dame Shirley Porter, in her fight to overturn a £27 million surcharge for "disgraceful gerrymandering".

THE Conservative leader, William Hague, had an emergency operation for a blocked sinus. The announcement embarrassed some of his colleagues who had complained that he had been "wimpish" for staying in bed with flu for a week.

THE EDITOR of the British Medical Journal, Richard Smith, castigated the quality of scientific papers he and his colleagues receive, saying that only 5 per cent of published articles reached minimum standards of scientific soundness.

THE TORIES challenged Tony Blair to explain the "huge increase" in spending on staff and refurbishment for his Downing Street "court", up by over 40 per cent since election day.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES were ignoring rules to prevent BSE-infected beef being eaten by humans more than five years after controls were introduced, the BSE inquiry was told.

METHODISTS voted overwhelmingly at their annual conference in Scarborough in favour of entering into formal talks with the Church of England with a view to eventual union.

THE Countryside Alliance was in turmoil following the dismissal of its influential public relations chief, Janet George.

PASSENGER complaints about privatised rail companies rose to a record 1 million last year. Richard Branson's Virgin Trains came top, with 195,000 letters a year.

THE QUEEN officially opened the £512 million British Library in London.

DIANE BLOOD, who fought a long battle for the right to be artificially inseminated with sperm taken from her husband as he lay dying, announced she was pregnant.

RUDY NARAYAN, the lawyer and black rights activist who was accused of helping to spark the 1995 Brixton riots, has died aged 60.

Lawrence inquiry fiasco as suspects deny involvement

David Pallister and Rory Carroll

THE parents of Stephen Lawrence on Monday begged black militants not to turn the public inquiry into their son's murder into a circus after furious protests by members of the Nation of Islam led to scenes of violence and farce.

Doreen and Neville Lawrence had waited five years to see five white youths answer questions about their movements on the night of Stephen's death and their attitude to black people. But within an hour the cross-examination had been halted amid pandemonium as police fired CS gas on demonstrators outside the building.

Jamie Acourt, the first of the five suspects to take the stand, was left in no doubt about the hostile reception he was going to get as he strutted into the building in his sunglasses, dark suit and open-necked, blue-checked shirt. "Murderers," the protesters chanted outside — and, once he had taken the witness stand, a large section of the public gallery, including the Nation of Islam militants, raised their fists and turned their backs.

Gasps and jeers had erupted from the public as Acourt, aged 22, denied being a racist or ever carrying knives. Within seconds of his cross-examination starting, the inquiry chairman, Sir William Macpherson, warned him against committing perjury, and the Lawrence family savoured a moment that had eluded them through five years, two trials and a coroner's inquest.

After he had taken the oath, Edmund Lawson QC, the inquiry counsel, told him he enjoyed immunity and asked him if he was prepared to assist the inquiry. "Yes," said Acourt with what would be typical of his monosyllabic responses.

But shortly afterwards chaos erupted as a group from the Nation of Islam invaded the council chamber, following serious scuffles outside. As the phalanx of militants — wearing dark suits, white shirts and red bow ties — marched down the room, Acourt was bundled by police out of a back door.

The leader of the group, wearing a sophisticated wire radio transmitter, bellowed at Sir William: "This is a sham. You are stopping the people from coming into the inquiry."

To the astonished Lawrences, they shouted: "You have got to stand firm, brothers. Slavery is over."

The inquiry was adjourned for three hours, after which the Lawrences' barrister, Michael Mansfield, resumed questioning Acourt and two others of the five-man gang.

Pressed on evidence that they carried knives in public and were racists, the three were taciturn and hostile. Like his brother, Neil Acourt, aged 22, said he was unable to remember details. He repeatedly denied being a racist and said remarks made on a police surveillance video said to be "peppered" with references to "niggers" and "Pakis" were "a joke".

He said he was angry at having been accused of Stephen's murder and had been "persecuted" ever since. Fear of attack had forced him to start carrying a knife for protection.

David Norris, aged 21, said there was "no evidence whatsoever" against him, and he had been very angry at being accused of the killing.

Earlier, it seemed unlikely the inquiry would resume following the disruption. CS gas from four floors down floated up the lifts at Hannibal House in London's Elephant and Castle, injuring four security guards.

Doreen Lawrence rushed to a microphone in an attempt to restore calm. "At no time have we ever disrupted anything," she shouted.

"Please, please keep calm in order for us to continue. The police attitudes towards us and my family and people in the black community have been disgraceful. But for the safety of everybody, please could you keep calm."

Members of the Nation of Islam gather before the arrival of five suspects in the Lawrence inquiry, and the outbreak of violence which forced the hearing to be suspended PHOTOGRAPH: DOUG MARKE

Aids research given a boost

Sarah Boseley

MICROSOFT billionaire Bill Gates, Levi Strauss and the Government are leading the way in donations for the development of an Aids vaccine by 2007, it was announced at the start of the 12th World Aids conference in Geneva last week.

Although Levi Strauss has not revealed the value of its contribution, Mr Gates has stumped up $1.5 million, and the Government £200,000 from Clare Short's Department for International Development.

The gifts are being hailed as the first significant commitments from an individual, a government and a corporation towards an organised international effort to develop a vaccine which is the best hope for the 16,000 people infected with HIV every day. Ninety per cent of these live in the developing world, where drugs that have proved so effective in normalising life with Aids in the West are prohibitively expensive.

The conference saw the launch of the International Aids Vaccine Scientific Blueprint — a strategy to get money into the right labs for research on a vaccine and trials started in blackspots.

In a statement the International Aids Vaccine Initiative, the charity behind the blueprint, said: "Scientists believe that a vaccine is possible; however, so far, vaccines have not been a priority."

The pharmaceutical industry is reluctant to invest heavily in a project that may not bring vast rewards, as there is no money in the developing world to yield the returns it says it needs for the high costs of research.

"The world is not on track to meet the goal of a safe and effective Aids vaccine in the next decade," said Margaret Johnston, the charity's vice-president for scientific affairs. "This programme will not only put us back on track; it will put us on a fast track."

The blueprint recommends the creation of between three and six "international product development teams" to speed the testing of promising vaccines in areas where there are Aids epidemics, and to promote links between scientists in the developed and developing world — as well as ensuring it is those in the developing world who benefit once vaccines are ready.

Experts row over 'definitive' divorce findings

David Brindle

CHILDREN of divorced or separated parents run twice the risk of suffering problems ranging from poor performance at school to psychiatric disorder in later life, a definitive assessment of all available research concluded last week.

But many such problems will stem not from parental separation but from the conflict preceding it, according to experts brought in from Australia and New Zealand to give an impartial verdict on an issue that has split British researchers.

The experts' conclusion is that deeply unhappy couples should stay together "for the sake of the children" only if they can protect them from the effects of the misery and feuding. Otherwise, separation may be the better option.

"It is especially important that parents appreciate the possible damage from overt conflict and violence and from the involvement of children in their disputes," said Bryan Rodgers of the Australian National University in Canberra.

The scale of harm to children through divorce and separation has been a hotly contested academic dispute. Some studies have claimed that children fail at school, turn to crime, suffer ill-health and grow up to repeat their parents' mistakes. Others have argued that such effects are greatly overstated and that worse befalls children who stay in acrimonious, intact families.

Mr Rodgers, together with Jan Pryor of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, was commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to review more than 200 British studies on the issue. The experts conclude that "as a rule of thumb, many adverse outcomes are roughly twice as prevalent among children of divorced families compared with children from other families". These outcomes vary from bed-wetting and aggression to below-par school performance and early parenthood and smoking, drinking and drug misuse.

However, Mr Rodgers and Ms Pryor say that most studies have gone wrong in failing correctly to attribute such outcomes to what children experience during the build-up to separation and divorce.

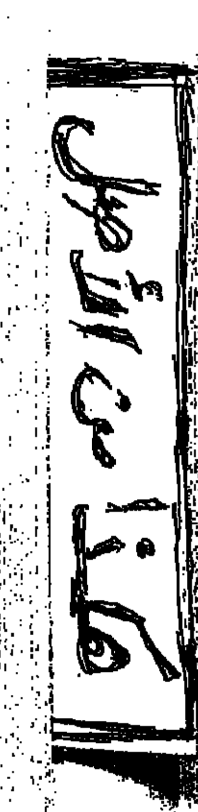
"Although the differences in outcomes are clear, it cannot be assumed that parental separation is their underlying cause. The complexity of factors that impinge on families before, during and after separation indicates a process, rather than a single event, that merits careful examination."

The experts also cast doubt on the widely held view that it is the absence of a father figure that contributes most to problems among children of separated and divorced parents, pointing out that children whose fathers die do not exhibit as many difficulties but children in stepfamilies do.

Janet Lewis, JRF director of research, said she hoped the expert assessment would help calm academic rivalry over the issue. More research was needed, though, on what children themselves felt.

Maeve Sherlock, director of the National Council for One Parent Families, said the experts' findings "explode the myth that children inevitably fare worse because they live in a one-parent family".

Polly Toynbee, page 24



Cook's ethical arms policy in disarray

Richard Norton-Taylor and Ian Black

THE Government has approved more than 2,000 licences for arms exports to some of the world's most volatile trouble-spots in apparent breach of its ethical foreign policy guidelines, according to a report published last week.

They include categories covering the supply of small arms and machine-guns to security forces in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Indonesia, despite a pledge that licences would not be granted if there was "a clearly identifiable risk that the export might be used for internal repression".

Sixty-four licences were granted to Indonesia for categories of equipment including bombs, tanks and combat aircraft, some at the height of the political and economic turmoil earlier this year.

A flood of licences has been cleared for India and Pakistan, embroiled in a dispute over Kashmir and nuclear tests, despite recent ministerial statements that arms sales should not be approved if they increased regional tension.

Export licences for "small arms, machine-guns and accessories" were granted to Bahrain, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe — all countries on the face of it covered by the guidelines.

Thirty-six export licences were granted to China for categories of equipment including large-calibre weapons, rockets and missiles covered by a European Union embargo. Licences were also granted for arms-related exports to Algeria.

The new figures are contained in a report by Saferworld, an independent research group, based on numerous ministerial answers to questions from MPs.

Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat defence spokesman, pointed to a recent statement by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, about the dangers of an arms race on the Indian subcontinent. "Yet in the light of the fact that 535 licences have been granted to India from May 1, 1997, to May 10, 1998, for such items as bombs, missiles, combat aircraft and riot control agents, we are clearly fuelling an arms race ourselves," Mr Campbell said. He called for the setting up of a Commons commitee to scrutinise arms exports and individual licence applications.

Labour MP Ann Clwyd said: "It is difficult to know what arms we are selling because it is shrouded in secrecy."

Saferworld concedes that it is impossible to tell exactly what each export licence covers, because the information given is in broad categories.

However, information based on Department of Trade and Industry statistics show that licences were approved for the supply of "toxological agents, riot control agents and related equipment, including tear gas" to Indonesia, India and Turkey.

Mr Cook said recently the Government had "made it quite clear we will not sell equipment that will be used in internal oppression".

Guidelines announced by the Foreign Office soon after Labour came to power state that "an export licence will not be issued if the arguments for doing so are outweighed . . . by concern that the goods might be used for internal oppression or international aggression, or by the risks to regional stability, or other considerations."

Though these considerations include the potential effect on Britain's commercial interests and its "essential strategic industrial base", the rules stress the importance of human rights and the need "not to introduce into [a] region new capabilities which would be likely to lead to increased tension".

The Foreign Office said that the Government's first annual report on strategic exports — expected this month — would give details of all major export licences.

Chancellor to take axe to Beckett's jobs budget

Seumas Milne

GORDON Brown is planning to slash the budget of the President of the Board of Trade and one-time ally Margaret Beckett, who has recently clashed with the Chancellor over the minimum wage and the partial privatisation of the Post Office, Government sources claim.

Regional aid to businesses for job creation in deprived areas is to be "axed dramatically" as part of Mr Brown's forthcoming three-year spending review, insiders say, although the Chancellor has decided to funnel more cash into the department's science and research budget.

One minister last week predicted a serious backlash among Labour MPs — many of whom represent areas of high unemployment where jobs depend on regional government grants — if the Treasury pressed ahead with the planned cuts to Ms Beckett's £3 billion annual budget.

Health, education and transport are the priorities in the Whitehall-wide Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set the financial framework for the remainder of this parliament. Almost all other departmental budgets are being squeezed to release cash.

But some of Ms Beckett's supporters believe the Department of Trade and Industry has suffered disproportionately because of disputes between the president and an unforgiving Chancellor.

Treasury sources dismiss talk of a Beckett-Brown rift and say the Chancellor has gone out of his way to smooth feathers since the Prime Minister came down in favour of Mr Brown to settle the minimum wage row. But there is no doubt that the former alliance between the two ministers has disintegrated.

Worries about the impact of the three-year spending settlement, due to be unveiled this month, go deeper. Some ministers argue it will give the Treasury unprecedented power over Government policy, because any extra increases will have to come from contingency reserves under the Chancellor's control.

"It is going to be Gordon's strait-jacket for the whole Government," one said.

● Big investors may be forced to disclose how they vote on executive pay and bonuses in an attempt by the Government to limit the embarrassment caused by big boardroom pay rises in the privatised utility companies.

The Chancellor is thought to be ready to hold institutional shareholders responsible for keeping boardroom greed in check following the disclosure that directors of Yorkshire Water collected bonuses of 30 per cent of their basic pay.

Lords revolt on tuition fees

Ewen MacAskill

TONY Blair dug in over student tuition fees last week in spite of suffering defeat in the Lords and a rare attack from one of his own backbenchers.

The criticism reflected unease among Labour MPs over the discrepancy between the treatment of English, Welsh and Northern Ireland students, who have to pay £4,000 in tuition fees for the Scottish four-year courses, and those from Scotland and other parts of the European Union, who pay only £3,000.

Dennis Canavan, the leftwing MP for Falkirk West, asked: "Why should students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland doing a four-year course at Scottish universities have to pay £1,000 more than any other country in the EU?"

Last week the Lords defeated the Government by a majority of 123 to reinstate an amendment exempting all UK students from paying tuition fees in the fourth year. It was the first time since the election that peers insisted on trying to retain a Lords amendment rejected by the Commons.

Mr Blair said the Lords proposal would be overturned by the Commons because it would cost £27 million a year. Denying the policy was unjust, he said: "You should not forget that a third of the poorer students under our proposals are absolved from tuition fees altogether and the next one-third get them reduced as a result of their parental income."

Schools to be given radical overhaul

John Carvel

MINISTERS last week prepared the way for radical proposals in Labour's next election manifesto to overhaul the organisation of England's schools and give businesses a greater influence over how pupils are taught.

The Education and Employment Secretary, David Blunkett, announced the first 25 education action zones and said they would be "testbeds for the school system of the next century".

Although the Government is not yet sure which of the zone experiments will prove the most successful, ministers are confident they will provide Tony Blair with models for a Third Way in education, departing from the traditional structure of local authority and independent schools.

"This is the beginning of an entirely new way of delivering the education service. It is about partnership based on success rather than outdated dogma on either side," Mr Blunkett said.

The 25 zones were the winners of a contest among 60 local areas for extra funding worth £1 million per zone per year and opportunities to vary the normal school curriculum and pay and conditions of teachers. To qualify, areas had to attract business sponsorship.

Mr Blunkett said companies backing the successful zones included Blackburn Rovers, Cadbury Schweppes, Nissan, Rolls Royce, Kellogg, British Aerospace, Tate & Lyle, American Express and Brittany Ferries.

In most cases the firms are expected to play a secondary role in zone partnerships led by the local authority, but the zone in the London borough of Lambeth is being led by Shell International. Education Department sources said the company's controversial activities in Nigeria were not thought to have any bearing on its role in Lambeth, where it was a leading employer.

The zones are clusters of about 20 schools in areas of social disadvantage. Twelve will start in September and another 13 next January. Mr Blunkett said there would be a fresh round of bidding for further zones early next year.

Parents who were dissatisfied with the standard of schools would be able to put in a bid to run a zone with advice from officials at the Department for Education and Employment. There could also be bids from groups of local headteachers.

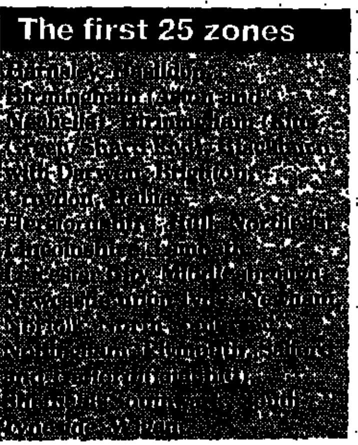
Stephen Byers, the schools minister, said the zones would be "a fundamental change to the education status quo and a real threat to those vested interests which have for too long held back our school system."

David Willetts, the shadow education secretary, said the zones would be "left in the hands of the very local education authorities that even the Department for Education believes have failed".

David Hart, of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the zones offered the chance for a "quantum leap in education standards". If they took off nationally, they would "become the Trojan horse which could well destroy local education authorities as we know them".

● Education ministers plan to set up an élite corps of specially trained teachers to help the 15,000 pupils permanently excluded from school for truancy or misbehaviour and draw them back into full-time education.

The first 25 zones



Sun sets on Blair over euro

Michael White

THE Sun's post-election honeymoon with Tony Blair came to an abrupt end last week, with an unrestrained attack on the Prime Minister's pro-European stance.

Rupert Murdoch's tabloid denounced the prospect of Britain joining the euro with renewed ferocity in a front page editorial under the headline: Is this the most dangerous man in Britain?

An inside spread, with a picture of Mr Blair wearing a mask — similar to the Conservatives' "demon eyes" poster of the general election campaign — said the Prime Minister was determined to scrap the pound.

Although the Sun has always opposed the euro, there had been speculation that Mr Murdoch would temper the editorial line as Britain moved closer to joining the single currency. That prospect appears to have been dashed. Significantly, the Sun's new stance came during a visit to London by Mr Murdoch, and just weeks after he appointed David Yelland as its new editor.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will attempt to rebuild bridges when he delivers a keynote speech this month at a conference of Mr Murdoch's top editors and executives in the United States.

Mr Blair brushed aside the assault: "We have a very firm policy. That policy is in the national interest because it refuses to rule out a single currency in principle, and says the test is what is good for British jobs, British industry, British investment," he told MPs.

But it was noticeable that Mr Blair, whose courtship of the Sun has been a crucial element of his political strategy, avoided picking a fight with it, and refrained from sounding as enthusiastic about the euro as he did last month at the European Union's Cardiff summit.

He also endorsed the Sun's claim to be reopening what it sees as a public-spirited debate on the pros and cons of Britain joining the 11 EU states committed to the euro.

Downing Street insiders dismissed the Sun's attack as a simple case of a newspaper trying to generate publicity and shift extra copies.

The Conservatives gleefully fell on the editorial statement as proof they are back in tune with public opinion and the tabloid press. William Hague is trying to steer a course between his Europhile and deeply phobic wings by ruling it out for this and the next parliament.

When Mr Blair stood for Parliament in 1983 he did so committed to phased withdrawal from what was then the European Economic Community. By 1987 Neil Kinnock was reconciled to "working constructively with our EEC partners". John Smith was also an enthusiast.

All that suited Mr Blair's instincts. During the 1994 leadership contest, he conceded there were "potential benefits" to the euro, despite technical problems for Britain's very different economy. That remains his position.

By January 1995 he was telling Brussels that Labour would play a full role in developing monetary union. But before the 1997 election he played the Eurosceptic card.

Bobbing and weaving is the hallmark of his Euro-rhetoric. His instincts are pragmatic, not ideological. He believes a single currency poses no threat to national independence. If it works, he wants to be part of it. What alarmed the Sun were his remarks at Cardiff.

The Sun's front page attacking Tony Blair last week

Just say no, page 19

Rebel dampens PM's day

PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

OBVIOUSLY the Prime Minister expected to be asked about the Sun's assault at Question Time, so he arranged for George Turner (Lab Norfolk NW) to ask a supportive question.

Mr Turner, the original natterjack toady, inquired sycophantically whether he had been "shocked, amused or flattered". Then he added, "more seriously . . .", as if it had all been a lighthearted joke and the Tories collapsed with derisive laughter.

Mr Blair, equally well prepped, wished the Sun had put a more flattering description in the headline, such as "He has the potential to be a truly great Prime Minister". Then he added sternly that newspapers had the right to print what they liked, but he intended to govern in the national interest.

This was all roughly as impromptu as the embarrassing banter you hear at a Royal Variety Performance. Mr Blair and Rupert Murdoch are great friends. If they are now pretending to have had a falling out, then there is some deeper, perhaps darker, reason which will remain hidden from the rest of us who exist mainly to be manipulated by them.

Peter Lilley, the deputy leader of the Conservative party, then challenged Mr Blair over welfare payments. William Hague has been ill with a virus for several days. Mr Lilley sounded querulous by comparison, rather like Dr Niles Crane in the television sitcom Frasier learning that someone has forgotten to chambré his vintage Margaux.

Alan Beith, standing in for Paddy Ashdown, wondered gently whether the Sun's attack might make Mr Blair think again about press magnates with near monopolies and their predatory pricing policies.

Then the whole session went pear-shaped for the Prime Minister. Mr Lilley made — for him — a fairly effective attack on the extraordinary fact that English, Welsh and Northern Ireland students have to pay more to go to Scottish universities than people from other European Union countries.

Mr Blair began to blather. It was all to do with maintenance grants and fairness to other British universities. None of this sounded convincing. But then neither did Mr Lilley.

Up rose Denis Canavan, an old unreconstructed Labour leftie. Mr Canavan proceeded to repeat everything Mr Lilley had just said, as if he had been sleeping off his lunch for the previous 10 minutes.

But so angry was he, so articulate and so savage in his contempt for the Labour lickspittles, who never ask an awkward question, that dozens of Tories stood up for him, cheering and waving their order papers — a sight as astounding as seeing bare-chested tattooed English fans cheering an opponent's goal.

The door in China's wall

NEVER before has a summit been made to succeed so swiftly. At 10am last Saturday Bill Clinton was reviewing the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Tiananmen Square. At midday his summit with Jiang Zemin was already over, and the two presidents began a joint press conference. By the afternoon the White House was hailing "an extraordinary day in the evolution of US-China relations". By the evening Bill and Zemin were hamming it up at the state dinner with a baton and the PLA band.

Both sides have a vested interest in being seen to succeed. By making two crucial last minute concessions, Mr Jiang has helped Mr Clinton to confound his critics — those in China are less vocal but may still need attention. Beijing only agreed in the final days to the mutual "detargeting" of nuclear weapons. And the Chinese decision to broadcast live the joint press conference — in which Mr Clinton condemned the Beijing massacre — was a surprise till the very end.

The Americans are claiming a historic breakthrough with "substantial results which will make life more secure". The Chinese talk more cautiously of "a new stage of development" and mention unresolved questions about Washington's Taiwan policy. But both sides appear to share the same long-term strategic view: Mr Clinton talks of two great nations setting an example to the world; Mr Jiang says that no force on earth can hold back their new relationship. Their joint vision of a new "partnership" seems to be held quite genuinely: these are presidents who want to change the world.

It is obviously better for everyone if the United States and China get on well: the alternative not so long ago was a two-decade-long disaster for Asia that threatened world peace. But it would be sensible to stand back and make a cool assessment of what has been achieved, and at what price. China's neighbours need to form a clear picture before welcoming the new partnership — or becoming alarmed by it. And the whole world may reflect on the implications of strategic *entente*, if it should become reality, between the most powerful country and the most populous one.

It will take time to see the results. The White House was quick to issue a bumper factsheet: this scoops up everything from significant commitments on non-proliferation to a worthy but minor agreement to conduct talks on bilateral humanitarian aid. Trade relations come a long way down the list, yet this till recently was billed as one of the top concerns: the World Trade Organisation negotiations this month could cause a bump. China's emphasis on Taiwan suggests that this too is tricky unfinished business. There is also a lurking danger in the negative feelings overlaid by this new euphoria — US impatience with the Chinese, and Chinese resentment at being patronised — which could quickly resurface if the climate changed.

Outside watchers should also consider critically the fundamental premise of constructive engagement with China that the White House says has now been vindicated. There is a case in favour: China is becoming more open and some modest discussion on political reform seems to be encouraged by Mr Jiang. But on human rights the problem is not a lack of high-level dialogue but the persistence of low-level persecution — which Mr Jiang continued to defend. Summits do have their own rhetorical licence in which both the US and Chinese political cultures fully indulge. But when Tony Blair visits China in October he would be well advised to pay more concern to deeds than words.

Saddam remains in the dock

SANCTIONS are a blunt instrument, as ordinary Iraqis have found to their cost during the eight long years since the invasion of Kuwait. But the news that Saddam Hussein developed the ability to mount deadly nerve gas on missiles — and may still have it — is a reminder of an even less discriminating weapon in a dangerous part of the world. It is a depressing story because only a few days earlier, the head of the United Nations Special Commission (Unscom), Richard Butler, was sounding unusually upbeat. He reported Iraqi agreement to a "road map" to end the sanctions that have crippled a once-booming economy and malnourished a generation of blameless children. But last week a gloomy Mr Butler confirmed that tests proved Iraq had, despite repeated denials, loaded warheads with the lethal nerve agent VX.

The revelations are certain to further delay the day when Unscom can verify that Iraq has dismantled its weapons of mass destruction, a prerequisite for lifting the oil sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait. They are bad news because since the standoff between Baghdad and the UN last February, Iraq's behaviour had improved. Nobody expected Saddam Hussein to change his spots, but there were hopes that deception about his arsenal would give way to co-operation. There was even "light at the end of the tunnel", with explicit UN acknowledgement of progress on the nuclear dossier, a concession coaxed out of a reluctant US. Parallel movement on the ballistic missile, chemical and biological files has yet to be seen.

Friends of Iraq such as Russia and France believe these revelations were deliberately leaked to rein in an over-optimistic Unscom chief. But they do not dispute them. The US and Britain certainly want to shift the burden back on to Iraq to tell the truth, rather than Unscom to prove its case. But it is President Saddam and his inspectors who are in the dock, not Mr Butler. Unscom's job is to verify that those deadly weapons — worth billions of dollars in lost oil revenues to the man who developed and used them — have been completely scrapped. And when that happens, the sanctions should go. Iraq and the world can only hope that President Saddam goes with them.

Rituals and marches

"WE'RE all losers," is not a sentence too many public figures would utter. Yet these were the words chosen on Monday by Alistair Graham, the former trade unionist who has grappled with a very hard task. As the chairman of the Northern Ireland Parades Commission, he had to rule on which of the traditional Orange marches could go ahead and which should be re-routed — away from the nationalist communities who see them as offensive and unwanted. On Monday he delivered his verdict on the most incendiary march, declaring that the Orangemen should be barred from parading through the nationalist Garvaghy Road in Portadown on Sunday. This march to Drumcree has been the trigger of tension and violence for the past two years. He knew that no one would be entirely happy with his decision: unionists would complain about the places that were kept off-limits, nationalists would complain about those that were not.

It is the unionists who feel the greatest anger — led by the Orangemen who have rejected the Commission's plan. Freedom of assembly is a basic human liberty and few can blame them for loudly insisting on their right to exercise it. The several thousand parades of the current season are, to the Protestant community of Northern Ireland, a matter of religious freedom. Curbing that right is not a decision that can be taken lightly.

Nevertheless, the tragedy of Ulster's war is that the normal rules of peacetime do not always apply. Rights the rest of us take for granted have often lapsed in Northern Ireland, sacrificed for the more urgent demands of order and safety. The enforced re-routing of Drumcree is only the latest example. If Ulster were not riven by conflict, then the abnormality of a non-elected commission allowing some marches but not others would not arise. But Ulster is a divided land, making such decisions inevitable.

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, should have accepted the ruling, while arguing that the entire point of a peace process is to build a country where a loss of freedom like a marching ban will no longer be necessary. Instead, Mr Trimble was in his usual posture: looking over his shoulder at the rejectionists behind him, warning gloomily of the "potentially fatal impact on our hopes for peace".

Nationalist leaders showed flexibility, advising those residents on streets open to Orange marchers not to fight back. Now it's up to the Orange Order to make the equivalent gesture, by accepting the ruling. Best of all, they could do sit down and talk to the nationalist residents whose streets they want to walk. After all, that's what the Good Friday agreement is all about — and the people have voted for that twice over.

Cambodia keeps killing fields alive

Martin Woollacott

WHO would think that you could fix an election with a few hundred tons of white powder? That is what has been happening in Cambodia, where the ruling Cambodian People's Party has conducted a drive to register citizens committed to voting for the country's near-dictator, Hun Sen, this month by handing over "gifts" of monosodium glutamate.

In exchange for the packet of powder, the voter thumbprints a booklet which he is told to keep. This, says the CPP, is a "receipt" for the MSG. According to the opposition parties, it is a document that the CPP-dominated local authorities will use to drive thousands of voters to the polls.

If the white powder game was the only trickery going on, the black comedy of Cambodia's election would not also be a tragedy. But the MSG is the gentler end of a ruthless campaign that has included the killing of officials, soldiers and politicians associated with Hun Sen's former partner in government, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the subversion of supposedly neutral electoral commissions, and the systematic denial of television and radio time to the opposition. The chances are that the vote this month will legitimise a ruler and a party which, if they existed in almost any other country, the international community would at least be holding at arm's length.

A report for the United Nations Association in Britain by the former Financial Times correspondent Stewart Dalby is the latest to point out that few, if any, of the conditions for a proper election exist. Yet such is the commitment by many countries to the fiction that democracy has been established in Cambodia that Hun Sen is regarded almost as an asset.

Perhaps there will be no more political killings before the elections, but there have been more than 100 in the last year — generals, policemen, civil servants, and party organisers shot down at their homes, as they sat in cafés, as they drove along the street. Probably the other parties will now get regular time on the television — after months in which they have received not a single minute and in which news events such as the return of Prince Ranariddh, the leader of the royalist party, have not been covered.

Perhaps the votes will be accurately counted. But, if there is a chance that the election will be fair, in this narrow sense, it will not be free, because of all that has gone before. It is almost exactly a year since the show trial of Pol Pot by his former comrades in the tiny pocket of territory that the Khmer Rouge still occupied at that time. His death this year and the defection of most of the few remaining Khmer Rouge seemed to many to mark the end of that organisation. But the truth is that the Khmer Rouge is alive and well. Indeed it constitutes by far the most important part of the government, administration, and armed forces of the country.

Cambodia has become more of a Khmer Rouge state in the past five years. To the Khmer Rouge, including Hun Sen, that the Vietnamese picked to run Cambodia after they invaded in 1979 have been added a steady run of defectors. It is not the Khmer Rouge that has ended, it is the split in the Khmer Rouge that has ended. They are now all gathered in Hun Sen's camp. It would be wrong to suggest that the former Khmer Rouge who survive in Cambodia should be regarded as untouchably evil people. Some of them were genuinely rebels against the monstrous crimes of which the first Khmer Rouge regime was guilty.

They then had 10 years under the influence of shrewd Vietnamese communists, during which Cambodia and Vietnam faced the sustained hostility of the West and China. They could be forgiven for questioning the democratic ideals of nations that overtly and covertly supported Pol Pot during those years. But they learned their politics in a vicious school and it would be surprising if they were natural democrats. Certainly Hun Sen is not. He and his ex-Khmer Rouge apparatus have a tight grip on power in Cambodia and they have never seen any reason to relax it.

They did not do so in 1993, when the costly UN-guided elections led to a victory for Prince Ranariddh's party. Hun Sen simply refused to accept the result, implicitly threatening war if he were not allowed to remain in government. The outside powers who decide these things — the United States, China, Japan, Thailand, Australia, the Europeans — advised Prince Ranariddh to agree, and a fractious coalition followed.

THAT collapsed last July when Hun Sen rid himself of Prince Ranariddh and his party after the latter made an effort to outflank him by doing his own deal with the rump Khmer Rouge in the forests.

Since then a number of countries have laid token sanctions on Hun Sen, but the thrust of international action has been to patch things up so that a halfway respectable election can be held. It is one that Hun Sen will win, or at least he has so stacked the odds that he is likely to gain a victory by coercing and suborning enough voters.

Why this acceptance of Hun Sen and his party's undemocratic hold on power? The answer is that the countries with influence either do not want democracy in Cambodia at all or do not want it enough. China is against a real democracy in Cambodia because of its fears of democracy at home. Vietnam is ambivalent. The Southeast Asian countries do not want trouble. The United States defers to China and European countries defer to the US, except for France which has, however, decided for inscrutable reasons to support elections at almost any cost.

Japan and many other nations that put money and men into the UN exercise in Cambodia do not want to take action to suggest that it had been a failure. The elections should have been postponed, but that is now a lost cause. The only consolation is that some democratic politicians will undoubtedly be elected to fight on for a cause that the outside world has so half-heartedly sustained.

Togo leader re-elected in disputed poll

Thomas Sotinel in Abidjan

ON JUNE 24 the Togolese interior minister, General Seyi Mémène, announced that General Gnassingbe Eyadéma had been re-elected as president of Togo for a further five-year term. Eyadéma had won 52 per cent of the vote, Mémène said, just enough to avoid a runoff against his main opponent, Gilchrist Olympio, representing the Union of Forces for Change.

On June 23, 48 hours after polling ended, Mémène announced that his staff were taking over the ballot count. The decision followed the resignation of the president of the National Electoral Commission (CEN), Awa Nana, and of its members representing the ruling party, Rally of the Togolese People (RPT).

The RPT complained of being "pressurised" by the opposition. As a result the CEN, which requires the ruling majority and the opposition to be equally represented in its ranks, had its hands tied.

The interior minister then said that "the general trend suggested" that Eyadéma would be elected at the first round of the election. A while later Olympio claimed that he, not Eyadéma, had won.

The RPT is the party Eyadéma founded two years after coming to power in a bloodless coup in 1967. Until 1990, when a pro-democracy movement took shape in Togo, Eyadéma and the RPT enjoyed undisputed rule.

Despite the strength of the pro-democracy movement, the regime's hold on power was never in jeopardy, partly because of the violence of the presidential clan's crackdown during the three years of democratic protest, and partly because of divisions in opposition ranks.

During the run-up to the current election Eyadéma's ministers thought that he would win easily at the first round because the opposition forces had run out of steam. But they overlooked the political clout of Gilchrist Olympio, the son of Togo's first president, Sylvanus Olympio, who was killed in a 1963 coup led by Eyadéma.

Olympio, who survived an attempt on his life in 1992 and has since lived in exile in Ghana, was a candidate *in absentia*. He seems to have benefited both from being perceived as a "martyr" and from his political image as "Mr Clean".

Until the authorities stopped vote-counting in Lomé, initial results gave Olympio a huge lead over Eyadéma in the capital — about 80 per cent to 20 per cent.

Now that Eyadéma's victory has been announced — although it has not been ratified by the CEN — the regime could run into trouble with the European Commission. Brussels contributed $2 million towards the presidential poll and made a free and fair vote a precondition of its continuing to provide aid to Togo. So far, however, the Commission has merely taken note of "problems" relating to the poll.

(June 25)



Thousands of people demonstrate in Lomé as problems plague Togo's presidential election PHOTO: JEAN-PHILIPPE KSIAZEK

Europe must unite against hooligans

EDITORIAL

AFTER the shame came the worries. Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the entire German political community expressed indignation and sorrow after the violent incidents in the northern French town of Lens on June 21, where Germany played Yugoslavia in the World Cup.

They expressed sorrow for the seriously injured gendarme and sympathy for his family. They lambasted what Kohl described as "this modern vandalism", which continues to plague football not only in Germany but in Britain, the Netherlands, and France.

The German government remains deeply concerned about the damage the hooligans could do to the country's image. It dreads a resurgence abroad, and especially in France, of the spectre of the "bad German" which they have spent decades trying to exorcise.

At a time when Kohl — the most European-minded of German politicians — is about to hand over to a younger generation that did not experience the second world war, it looks as if Germany has still not managed to overcome the traumas of the past.

The fact that some supporters of the German football team give Nazi salutes and flaunt swastikas could be interpreted as merely anecdotal, if repugnant. But the combination of far-right symbols, xenophobic slogans and violence that has surfaced in recent years in Germany, resulting in the murder of immigrant workers, has revived memories of another age.

Bonn is not the same thing as Weimar. The snarls and brutal behaviour of a few lunatics are not sapping Germany's democratic foundations (even if far-right parties have had some success at the polls); but they are threatening the image that Germany has of itself and wants to project abroad.

Since the end of the second world war the Germans have made considerable efforts to be accepted by their former enemies. They have paid obsessive attention to what their neighbours think of them. They have striven to eschew self-interest in the interest of European integration.

On more than one occasion they have failed to fight back the arrogance that can sometimes arise from a justified feeling of pride. But they have succeeded in becoming as European as anyone else.

The strongest evidence of that was provided by French reaction to the incidents in Lens. Almost without exception observers steered clear of generalisations and blanket condemnation. The Germans must feel reassured: no one in France felt tempted to lump hooligans, Nazis and Germans together.

That is why it would be disastrous to spoil this welcome manifestation of European maturity by allowing the hooligans' violence to generate a siege mentality. The proper answer to the troublemakers is not to close down borders but, on the contrary, to reinforce European co-operation.

(June 25)

Latvia acts to defuse standoff with Russia

Antoine Jacob in Stockholm and Natalie Nougayrède in Riga

ON JUNE 22, after months of procrastination, the Latvian parliament bowed to pressure from Moscow and the European Union and adopted legislation making it easier for the country's large Russian-speaking minority to become naturalised.

Of the three Baltic states that regained their independence in 1991, after half a century under Soviet rule, Latvia has the highest proportion of ethnic Russians: about 700,000, or almost one-third of the population. A "citizenship law" introduced after independence gave Latvian nationality only to those who were already Latvian citizens when Soviet forces invaded the country in 1940 and to their descendants.

The remaining ethnic Russians became effectively stateless. They were subjected to a system of quotas and had to take an exam in Latvian history and language in order to qualify for citizenship. Only about 6 per cent of those theoretically eligible achieved this. The treatment of Russian-speakers was described as "discriminatory" by Moscow and criticised by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The new legislation will scrap the system of quotas, and citizenship will automatically be granted to all stateless children born in Latvia since 1991. The language exam will be simplified for the over-65s.

Moscow's response has been reserved. The Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, said after the vote in Latvia's parliament that "many issues still need to be resolved".

Larissa is a member of the Russian-speaking community in the Latvian capital, Riga. She explains what it means to be a non-citizen. Neither Latvian nor Russian, she feels she has no ties with any country. She cannot vote anywhere, and if she wants to travel the only document she can get is a special passport that indicates she is stateless.

Most ethnic Russians, or "redfeet", were sent to Latvia by the Soviet civil service and army. Once Latvia became independent, its government was in no mood to be lenient towards such former "colonisers" or "occupiers", and made naturalisation difficult.

Larissa tells how a Latvian police inspector turned up one day in a bar patronised by Russians: "She asked me for my linguistic certificate, which is supposed to indicate my level of proficiency in the Latvian language. I've been living in Latvia for 18 years, and my daughter grew up here and married a Latvian.

"I used to work as an air hostess for Aeroflot. When the Soviet Union disappeared, Baltic Airlines took me on. Then they began making people redundant, starting with Russians, because we don't speak good Latvian. The inspector fined me 50 lats [about $85, or the equivalent of a month's salary] because my certificate wasn't in order."

Larissa eventually went on a month-long Latvian course at her own expense. It was difficult at the age of 47 to go back to the classroom. Like other non-citizens, she feels that her life has become a series of petty humiliations, and that things were better before 1991.

She believes the Latvians find it hard to come to terms with the idea of a country with several communities, cultures and collective memories. But she has no intention of going back to Russia, where the standard of living is lower and salaries are not paid.

Officials at the Russian embassy in Riga talk of "cultural genocide", "apartheid" and "repression" — language that is out of all proportion with the Russians' actual predicament in Latvia — conveniently forgetting that the most dynamic and powerful entrepreneurs in the country are ethnic Russians.

In April Moscow began imposing economic measures on Riga and said that it would reduce its oil exports through Latvia (which account for 13 per cent of its total oil exports). Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, launched a campaign to boycott Latvian products. The official Russian justification for this was the "crushing by the police" of a demonstration of Russian-speaking pensioners in Riga in March.

That incident, which was hyped by the Russian media, triggered the crisis between Latvia and Russia, whose relations have never been easy.

Other incidents, as yet unexplained, followed: a bomb damaged a Riga synagogue in April; an anti-personnel mine exploded near the Russian embassy four days later. Investigations are being carried out by an FBI team sent in by Washington — to the great relief of the Latvians, who see the move as a sign of American willingness to help. Once cited as an example of a successful economic transition, Latvia now gets a lot of flak from the West.

There is genuine concern in Latvia about its administrative legislation, which still contains hangovers from the Soviet era, such as *propiska* (police permission to live in a given area) and the mention of one's ethnic group in one's passport.

The Latvian political scene, which was in turmoil in April following the standoff with Russia, has become fragmented. The nationalists are powerful, and the proximity of the general election in October could slow progress on the citizenship issue.

In neighbouring Estonia the integration of the ethnic Russian minority (30 per cent of the population) has also run into trouble — but without incurring Moscow's wrath. This has prompted many analysts to observe that something else may be behind the Russian-Latvian crisis. When the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, was engaged in a trial of strength with the Communist Duma in April, the Latvian issue provided a convenient opportunity for consensus.

At the same time Russian oil companies, unhappy at having to accept a sudden increase in the transit duty levied by the Latvian terminal of Ventspils on the Baltic, apparently pressed for economic sanctions against Latvia.

(June 24)



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 5 1998

Parallel lives in a city filled with hate

Christian Lecomte in Pristina finds the capital of Kosovo divided by violence and indifference

ALI GALICA winces when he speaks and holds his hand to his chest when he breathes in: he has a broken rib. He has the face of a boxer who has just been bludgeoned to defeat; his eyes puffed up to twice their volume, and his hair matted with dried blood. When four or five men attacked him, he did not stand a chance. He just curled up and took it: "I was like a punchball."

Galica, an ethnic Albanian, had just spent four hours at a police station. In Pristina, as everywhere in Kosovo, all policemen are Serbs. "A plainclothes cop held a pistol to my head and said he was going to blow my brains out. Then he laughed and added: 'I'm not going to waste this bullet on an ape.' Then the others started hitting me."

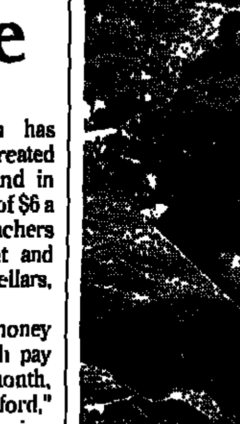
Galica is an underground tax collector in Pristina, capital of Kosovo province. He acts with great discretion. He does not carry an attaché case, but has an impressive number of pockets sewn into his clothes. By the end of the day these are filled with banknotes. His activity is illegal because his employer, "the republic of Kosovo", is not recognised.

Since Belgrade introduced a system of apartheid in 1989, the Albanian community has set up a parallel society designed to replace the Yugoslav Federation, which has stripped it of all its rights. It created its own education system and in 1992 imposed a voluntary tax of $6 a month on families so that teachers could be paid, books bought and premises — private flats, cellars, garages — rented.

"But 65 per cent of the money comes from businesses, which pay between $50 and $1,500 a month, depending on what they can afford," says Xhavit Dermaku, vice-president of the municipal financial council. "Expatriate Albanians send 3 per cent of their salaries to a bank in Tirana [the capital of Albania]."

The police who beat up Galica told him they thought the money he had collected was going to finance arms for the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). It was the first time he had been picked up. He will now lie low for a few weeks, then resume his rounds. "You know, Kosovo is probably the only country in the world where people welcome the taxman with a smile and a cup of tea," he says.

The lives of Pristina's 200,000 inhabitants are dominated by a mixture of violence and indifference. Albanians and Serbs rub shoulders, buy the same cigarettes, go to the same football matches, sit at the same café terraces. But that is all they share. Serbs look the other way when they pass an erstwhile Albanian friend, neighbour or work colleague, and vice versa. Pristina's city centre is deserted after dark. Albanians are afraid that they will run into gangs of skinheads from Belgrade, Serbs that they will meet KLA "terrorists" on leave.



A boy sleeps at Tropoje, Albania, after fleeing Kosovo with his ethnic Albanian family, who ignored fears that Serbs had mined mountain paths PHOTOGRAPH: LOUISA GOULIAMAKI

Adult Albanians and Serbs speak Serbo-Croat, the language in which they were educated before the break-up of Yugoslavia. Pupils today learn either Albanian or Serbian. Dardanja school is unusual in accepting both Albanian and Serbian students, but they are separated by a partition in the stairwell. Albanians are taught that their president is Ibrahim Rugova (the head of the Albanian community), while Serbian children learn to respect President Slobodan Milosevic. They trade insults in the playground.

Albanians promise that Kosovo's 150,000 Serbs will not become second-class citizens when independence comes — as they feel sure it will. The Serbs believe it will be impossible for Kosovo to secede from Yugoslavia.

"We Serbs live in a ghetto," says Anna. "The Albanians say we're racists, like the white leaders of South Africa under apartheid, while Belgrade treats us like peasants and prevents us from leaving Kosovo. Most Serbs would leave Kosovo if they were allowed to."

Belgrade wants to maintain as big a Serbian population in the province as possible. In 1995 it transferred several hundred Serbs from Krajina (a region in Croatia) to Pristina. They scrape a living as petty traders and are loathed by Albanians and Kosovo Serbs alike. Liljana sells American cigarettes in a street near a hotel that recently threw her out: "They thought I was Albanian, and when I told them I was a Serb from Knin they said it was the same thing."

A few years ago, a notice on the hotel door said: "No animals or Albanians." That was when the militia leader and mafioso Arkan was a member of parliament in Kosovo. He has gone, and so has the notice.

But the same spirit lives on. I saw an Albanian come into the television room of the hotel to watch a football match. The waiter showed him the door, saying: "You're Albanian, so you don't speak our language. How are you going to understand anything about the game?" Defeated by an argument that was as fatuous as it was hurtful, the man sloped out.

(June 17)

Arts world comes to aid of immigrants

Nathaniel Herzberg

MANY people in the arts world, angered by the French government's decision not to regularise some 70,000 illegal immigrants, have "sponsored" individual immigrants in the hope of persuading the authorities to let them stay on in France.

Their decision to do so is usually made on the spur of the moment — after hearing, for instance, the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, claim that far-left activists have been "manipulated by foreign organisations", seeing pictures of a ferry deporting *sans papiers* (those without documents) back to Algeria, or just getting a phone call from a friend, as when Michel Jonasz rang fellow pop singer, Zazie, and said: "I've listened carefully to the sort of songs you sing. They're wonderful, but I'm now asking you to actually do something."

Any lingering doubts are easily dispelled by assurances that it will all remain "individual and symbolic", as the theatre director Stanislas Nordey told the actress Judith Magre.

A collective movement seems to have taken shape around the notion of "republican sponsorship". It has already brought several thousand sponsors into contact with their "wards", who are illegal immigrants. Every week more and more people offer to become sponsors.

Sixteen months ago, when priority was being given to organising petitions in favour of the *sans papiers* and demonstrating against the then government's repressive legislation, few thought that the sponsorship idea — an initiative promoted by a voluntary association called Droits Devant! — stood any chance of getting off the ground.

A handful of prominent mayors agreed to appear at demonstrations wearing their red, white and blue sashes as a gesture in favour of the first cases of "republican sponsorship".

People thought that sponsorship cards, which have no legal value, would probably amuse police officers to whom they were shown. But would it make them any more lenient? It also seemed uncertain whether the pledge made by sponsors to support their wards in dealing with the authorities would survive the first cases of bureaucratic obstruction.

The film-maker Jeanne Labrune no longer asks herself such questions. On June 13 the Chinese family she had been sponsoring since April received a letter from the prefecture informing them that "following an examination of your case and in view of the new data you have supplied your request has been granted".

Labrune knew what had prompted the decision. The prefecture had known for months that the mother had been promised a job by a supermarket, that the son's headmistress had certified he was perfectly integrated, and that some members of the family had been in France since 1992. But in the meantime Labrune had written to several ministers, including the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and bombarded the prefect with requests for an appointment.

However, such a happy outcome is not exceptional. Novelists Annie Ernaux and Yann Queffélec have each decided to sponsor another illegal immigrant after the successful regularisation of their first wards. The eminent cancer specialist Léon Schwartzenberg is happy that he has now got "only" five *sans papiers* on his hands, after getting two others regularised.

It is all very well for Chevènement to make sarcastic remarks about the "uncitizen-like" nature of the initiative, or for his ministry to send sponsors a formal letter indicating that "it is the duty of the republic to respect the principle of equality and to refrain from favouring in any way someone who has the benefit of a recommendation". But even staff at the ministry admit, off the record, that a well-written letter can often produce the desired results.

The film-maker Jean-Pierre Thorn used guile. The unmarried mother he was sponsoring was Moroccan, but her son, born in France of a Syrian father, was not. Thorn mugged up on French nationality legislation. "Any stateless child born on French soil is French," he says. Now that it can be shown that the mother is the "parent of a French child", she will probably be regularised.

Eléonora Rossi, a young film director, relied on sheer persistence. She spent a whole day with her ward, an Algerian student, at Créteil prefecture, where she made such a nuisance of herself that she finally got to see the senior official dealing with her case. He told her to come back next day with more evidence.

"I went back with data on the student's attendance certificates at university, where he is studying *in situ* hybridisation, electronic microscopy and foetopathology. I could even show his season tickets for the past year. The official again asked me for 'a good reason why he should be regularised'. I told him that the manipulation of oocytes didn't exist in Algeria. 'That's good enough for me,' he said. The following week the student got his papers."

Sponsors gradually get to know those they are sponsoring. "My immigrant had never heard of my books, but I didn't know where Gambia was," says detective story writer Gérard Delteil.

Zazie gave all her phone numbers to her ward and got a photo in return, which she always carries.

The actress Florence Giorgietti saw her ward whip out his mobile phone as soon as she had sponsored him. "He told his family in Senegal he was going to marry a Frenchwoman. Since then, he keeps on leaving me phone messages which begin: 'This is your husband.' He knows I already have one, but says it doesn't matter."

In a few cases sponsors find that their wards lose touch with them. But more often the problem is how to lay down limits. "I told one of the four families I'm sponsoring they could stay with me for a while," says the writer Dan Franck. "I thought there were only three of them, but there turned out to be five."

"Once you get drawn in . . ." murmurs the musician Viviane Damiens. Now a sponsor for a third time, she still keeps in touch with her first two wards because the authorities got the nationality of one of them wrong and forgot to register one of the other's children. "But also because the main job still needs to be done once they've been regularised. They have one year to find a job. And then there are problems of housing, health and tax."

To what degree does politics come into it? There is a problem in reconciling this kind of individual action with the fact that organisations helping illegal immigrants have come out against any form of case-by-case regularisation.

"The fact that I have sponsored someone should not be allowed to serve as a pretext for not pressing for the regularisation of the 70,000 others," says film-maker Romain Goupil. "But how can I explain that to him? And how can all the political foot-dragging be stopped?"

Paradoxically, the case-by-case approach could be the answer. Most of the sponsors now seem to have come to the same conclusion. Goupil, who says that his pen is still "poised", knows full well that he will end up writing to Chevènement, Jospin and "perhaps even Jacques Chirac".

(June 20)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 5 1998

The Washington Post

Chinese Impressed by Live TV News

Steven Mufson in Beijing

IT WAS a typical Saturday at the Li family household — low-stakes mah-jongg and hours of watching television — until Chinese Central Television departed from its well-scripted news format to bring viewers a live broadcast of Presidents Clinton and Jiang Zemin giving a news conference.

"It was really amazing, we didn't know it was going to be on TV," said Li Mingzhi, an accountant at a private company in Beijing who watched it with his parents and younger sister. "All of us were amazed but the more I watched, the more I thought it was a totally normal thing."

Li was among scores of millions of Chinese who saw Clinton and Jiang debate some of the most taboo subjects in Chinese public discourse: individual rights, freedom of speech and the bloody June 4, 1989, crackdown on student-led demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Nearly a decade of television censorship of opposing views on the Tiananmen crackdown went by the wayside as Clinton declared that the protesters had "raised their voices for democracy" and that "the use of force and tragic loss of life was wrong."

It was a rare moment in Chinese television and politics. In a country where disagreements are usually kept behind closed doors and consensus is seen as crucial for ensuring political stability, Jiang not only tolerated a small debate with Clinton, he seemed to enjoy it. What was supposed to be a brief news conference stretched to more than an hour, with Jiang looking relaxed and confident as he made his case for China's political system and defended China's policies on sensitive issues of human rights and Tibet.

"He can smile a little and make jokes," said accountant Li, who was impressed by Jiang's performance. "And he did pretty well against Clinton. I like him."

Political analysts viewed the live broadcast as a sign of Jiang's increasing sense of security in his role as China's leader after years in the shadow of his mentor, the late senior leader Deng Xiaoping. They also saw it as a further sign of a modest relaxation in China's domestic political climate, which has tolerated an increasing number of calls for political liberalization over the past nine months.

China's President Jiang Zemin conducts a band with the same dexterity he displayed in his debate with Bill Clinton. Jiang defended China's policy on human rights with confidence PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT APPLEWHITE

"Jiang is probably the first Chinese leader to engage with an American president in a public way on policy differences, directly in front of the journalists," said Jia Qingguo, a professor of international relations at Beijing University. "It requires great courage and political skill."

Jiang looked at ease and sounded almost spontaneous — a sharp contrast to his first summit meeting with Clinton, in Washington last October, when he read a series of stock foreign policy formulations.

His effort to project a better image, analysts said, showed the increasing importance Chinese leaders place on television as a means of communication now that its penetration has increased more than fivefold in China in the past 12 years to cover about 90 percent of all Chinese households.

Students watching at Beijing University ran to tell friends to join them. "I admire Clinton," said one masters student. "He's honest and open . . . It doesn't matter which one is right and which is wrong. We need to listen to them both and make our own decisions. Before, we only saw the Chinese government side of it."

U.S. officials, who had sought agreement to broadcast Clinton's remarks live in China sometime during his visit, were surprised by the decision after being rebuffed earlier. White House National Security Adviser Sandy Berger hailed the televised event as "truly historic" and noted that Jiang passed up several opportunities to cut the question-and-answer period short.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao declined to say when the decision was made to broadcast the news conference live. "This illustrates that we adopted an open attitude and would like people to know the different views of the different sides. China is more and more open to the outside world," he said.

But some Chinese were cautious about declaring the beginning of a new era. "This is the last time we will be able to see this type of discussion," the Beijing graduate student said. "It was almost like a mistake. They will never broadcast it again."

A Beijing computer company employee agreed with the statement. "Clinton is the only person allowed to talk about June 4," he said. "Chinese people should be very happy. For the first time in nine years it's been mentioned, but too bad it has to be a foreigner that mentions it. It will be a very long time before a Chinese person says the kinds of things that Clinton said."

Clinton was adept at putting America's support for individual liberties in the context of maintaining stability, one of China's greatest anxieties after one and a half centuries of civil war, foreign occupation and political upheaval.

Door Opens a Little for Dalai Lama

John Pomfret in Beijing

HOLDING out the possibility of talks with the Dalai Lama and acknowledging the existence of secret contacts with the Tibetan spiritual leader, China's President Jiang Zemin last week provided the first public glimmers of hope in years over the future of Tibet.

At the end of his public dialogue with President Clinton, Jiang stopped suddenly, apologized for having to "take up an additional five minutes" and then launched into a spontaneous monologue listing his conditions for opening talks with the Dalai Lama.

Jiang said that as long as the Tibetan leader, who fled China in 1959 after China's bloody crackdown on Tibet, acknowledged that Tibet is an "inalienable" part of China, and that Taiwan is a province of China, "then the door to dialogue and negotiation is open."

Jiang's demands are not new, but, given that he raised the issue without prompting from Clinton, they represented an important change in the way China has handled Tibet, Western officials said. The tone differed sharply from the recent rhetoric in China, which has vehemently condemned the Dalai Lama as a "splittist" and blamed him for the trouble in that faraway region. Jiang did none of those things. As such, Tibet watchers said it was significant that Jiang's remarks were broadcast live in China — and could mark a significant softening of China's line on Tibet.

"No one expected him to even address it, I just don't know where that came from," said an administration official. "It is an unusual olive branch, a scarred olive branch, but an olive branch nonetheless."

For the past 10 years China has taken a hard line against any concessions to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan movement. There have been many false starts and blind alleys over the future of Tibet, once a feudal Buddhist theocracy. So Tibet watchers cautioned against undue optimism that a thaw in relations was at hand. But soon after Jiang made his comments, a senior official in the Tibetan government-in-exile welcomed Jiang's remarks.

"I would like to express support for Jiang's willingness to discuss this matter," said Lodi Gyari, the Washington-based representative of the Tibetan government-in-exile. "We would like to reciprocate in whatever way we could for forward movement."

Gyari said the Dalai Lama would like to make a religious pilgrimage to China to Mount Wutai in China's Shanxi province, a collection of five peaks sacred to Buddhists, and hoped to meet Jiang on his way there. China offered the Dalai Lama the opportunity to come to China in 1988 for the funeral of the Panchen Lama, the second most important Tibetan leader, but he declined. Since then the offer to visit China has been withdrawn.

Clinton expressed his understanding of Jiang's demand that the Dalai Lama acknowledge Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. He also encouraged Jiang to meet the Tibetan leader. "I have spent time with the Dalai Lama. I believe him to be an honest man, and I believe if he had a conversation with President Jiang, they would like each other very much," Clinton said.

Tibetan officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, added that secret talks are already taking place, although the usual channel — through the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi — remains closed. The officials said the talks were occurring outside China and that Americans are involved in the exchanges.

China defines Tibet as its political boundaries, whereas the Tibetan exile movement claims all lands in China with a Tibetan population.

Saddam's Smoking Warhead

EDITORIAL

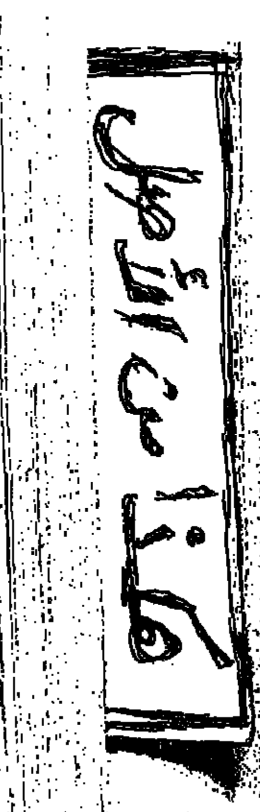
VX IS one of the deadliest poison gases. A few drops will kill a person in minutes. Spokesmen for Saddam Hussein's regime have long denied that Iraq possessed weapons containing VX. Now, thanks to the courageous and patient work of United Nations inspectors, we know that Saddam — once again — has been lying. Iraqi armed forces loaded VX gas into missile warheads before the 1991 Gulf War, and then sought to conceal the evidence. With the truth revealed, you might think the international community would redouble its efforts to defang this dangerous dictator. You would be wrong.

U.N. inspectors discovered the evidence in a weapons destruction pit in Taji, Iraq. Warhead fragments were sent to a U.S. Army lab for analysis: it found "significant amounts" of VX residue. At Iraqi insistence, the fragments are being sent for repeat checks in labs outside the United States, but U.N. arms-inspection chief Richard Butler says he has no doubt the results will be replicated.

How did Ambassador Butler's boss respond to the latest revelation of Iraqi perfidy? "We are dealing with the Iraqis on a large spectrum of issues," U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said, "and I hope this particular development will not destroy the improved relations that has allowed UNSCOM (the U.N. inspection agency) to carry on with its work." Never mind that Saddam is cheating and lying and most likely still concealing considerable quantities of this deadly poison; let's not disturb the "process" that's working so well.

But it must be clear to everyone by now — to Mr. Annan, and to President Clinton as well — that Saddam Hussein will never cooperate with the United Nations. He will pretend to cooperate when he must, and as long as it serves his interest, and in the meantime he will frustrate the U.N. inspectors as much as he can and retain as much of his nuclear-, biological- and chemical-weapons-making capacity as he can. To talk about improved relations in the face of evidence that relations, on a meaningful level, have not improved at all is simply to ignore reality.

From the Iraqi side, it's worth noting, there has been no comparable diplomatic nicety. The regime's statement following Mr. Butler's latest revelations called for a "clear strategy" to deal with Israel — "the usurpers of the land of Palestine and its holy places and the killers of its people" — and an immediate and unconditional lifting of U.N. economic sanctions. Otherwise, as the regime warned recently, the world should be prepared for a "great jihad." At least one side here is talking straight.



GATES-ZILLA

JUSTICE DEPT.

SIZE DOES MATTER

Net Result for Microsoft in Court Battle

Elizabeth Corcoran

MICROSOFT Corp. won an important victory in its antitrust battle with the Justice Department last week when a federal appeals court ruled that the company didn't violate a previous agreement with the government when it combined its Windows 95 software with an Internet browser.

The opinion struck down an order from U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson that would have required Microsoft to let computer makers sell its Windows 95 operating system separately from its Internet software, known as Explorer.

The ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington technically applied only to the Justice Department's limited case, filed last year, that Microsoft violated a 1995 consent decree when it bundled Windows 95 with the Internet software.

But legal experts said the ruling would force Justice to rework the strategy in its broader antitrust case against Microsoft's next version, Windows 98, which bundles the operating system even more tightly with the browser.

Windows 98 went on sale at the end of last month. Justice's broader antitrust case is due to be heard in court in September before Jackson, the same judge who was overruled in the more limited Windows 95 case.

A key contention in the department's Windows 98 case is that by requiring computer users to include the Internet product with it, Microsoft is illegally trying to expand a monopoly in Windows into another field.

The ruling was "a slam dunk for Microsoft and big trouble for Justice," said Robert Litan, a scholar with the Brookings Institution and formerly with the Justice Department's antitrust division. "The most contentious, highest-stakes part of the [government's] case will certainly be affected by this ruling," Litan said.

"I don't think it's a fatal obstacle," said William Kovacic, a professor at George Mason University School of Law. "But it took a case that the Justice Department had less than a 50-50 chance of winning on the day it was filed and made it more like 1 in 4, or 1 in 5," he said.

Microsoft executives were upbeat. The decision "reaffirms [our] central principle that Microsoft should be able to integrate its products and include new features on behalf of consumers," said Robert Herbold, the company's chief operating officer.

Justice Department officials said in a statement that they were "disappointed" with the ruling but determined to push ahead with the broader antitrust case against the software giant. "We remain confident that the evidence and our legal arguments . . . will demonstrate that Microsoft's conduct has violated federal antitrust laws," the statement said.

Quick on the Draw

COMMENT
Ellen Goodman

YOU HAVE to hand it to the tobacco moguls. These guys really know their business. Which is, of course, the advertising business.

After the Senate deep-sixed the tobacco bill, I let my fingers do the walking through pages and pages of cigarette ads. Guess what? The young and the ecstatically happy are still doing their "woman thing" with Virginia Slims. The rich and the thin are still lighting Parliaments by the pool. The addicted and delighted have even gone on a hot air balloon adventure with Dorals.

This standard workaday false image-making doesn't even compare to the $40 million public disservice campaign that undid the Senate deal. The folks who make cancer glamorous created the campaign that ultimately convinced many senators that they could get away with letting tobacco get away with it.

Back in April, they set out to transform the image of an anti-tobacco bill into a pro-tax bill. Ads, postcards and sign-up campaigns — the whole works — focused on the $1.10 a pack tax.

The commercials redefined the McCain bill as a regressive tax on the working class. In one commercial, they called it "a tax on 45 million Americans making under $30,000 a year." They even had a service worker complain, "I work hard. Why single me out?"

I still find it amazing that the lobby could spin so quickly with all those carcinogens in their lungs. Yet, apparently it worked. According to one poll, 22 percent of those polled believed the tobacco bill was mainly directed at teen-smoking. Sixty percent said it was directed at tax revenue.

Allow me to say that I too had qualms. Many senators did start to regard the anti-tobacco bill as the proverbial cookie jar. I think we ought to support programs like child care out of the budget not the ashtray.

The irony is that Republicans were the ones who spent the last several weeks trying to tag every amendment — from the marriage tax to the anti-drug programs — onto the deal. Indeed, it became harder to get the bill through the Senate than nicotine through a cement filter.

But in return for giving the moguls some protection from lawsuits, that bill would have made sure the Federal Drug Administration had power to regulate tobacco and forced the companies to make their internal research public. It would also have — unholy smoke — curtailed marketing to minors and made the companies pay serious penalties if the level of young smokers didn't drop off.

The question now as the tobacco fight goes into the next phase is whether this victory will let the tobacco pushers off the hook. It's likely. Last month Clinton took a step to keep public pressure on the designated villains. The Department of Health and Human Services is now going to monitor the brands preferred by kids as part of its annual drug abuse survey.

More to the point, if the deal is off, the lawsuits are back on. There are 37 state attorneys general lined up to sue the cigarette makers. In the past year alone, the companies paid $36 billion to settle four state Medicaid suits. As many as a thousand litigants are said to be suing for damages, using evidence the manufacturers knew the dangers of their product.

But there is a familiar message — a noncommercial message — in this debacle: Never underestimate the depth of the pockets or the skill of those folks who made Marlboro Country look patriotic. As they keep spinning through the next political cycle, imagine a small white rectangle in the corner of every commercial. Surgeon General's Warning: This political ad is hazardous for public health.

China Fights a War Against Hookworm

Steven Mufson in Wuhu

FORTY-ONE years ago, millions of peasants, soldiers and students across rural China lined the banks of dried-up rivers and lakes before the start of the rainy season, and turned the soil by hand in an effort to bury the snails that carry the parasite that causes schistosomiasis.

Under the orders of Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung, banners flew with slogans declaring "Our strength is boundless, our enthusiasm redder than fire," and "Empty the rivers to wipe out the snails, resolutely fight the big belly disease." An article in the Chinese Medical Journal of August 1958 hailed "the people's boundless energy," claimed widespread success and proclaimed that Wuhu county was "a snailless county."

Four decades later, studies here in the Wuhu area and across China are exploding another myth of the Mao era. The snails — and schistosomiasis — are alive and well and remain a gnawing problem in China. Other sorts of worms and parasites are even more abundant. Based on a 1990 nationwide survey of a million people, epidemiologists estimate that about 700 million Chinese — a staggering 62.6 percent of the population — harbor parasites.

Most of them live in the Yangtze River basin where the Three Gorges Dam will soon make a huge and unpredictable impact, probably sharply increasing the rates of certain diseases, such as schistosomiasis, in some areas and possibly lowering infection rates in other areas.

Infection rates for parasites have probably dropped in recent years, as China has grown more urban and peasants begin using more chemical fertilizers rather than human and animal excrement. But the "unholy trinity" of the parasite world — *Ascaris lumbricoides* (roundworm), *Trichuris trichiura* (whipworm) and *Ancylostoma duodenale* (hookworm) — still plague much of rural China and are stunting children's growth, damaging their mental abilities and making them lethargic and anemic. The number of Chinese with hookworm alone is nearly 200 million.

Though there is no hookworm in cities, go a few miles outside Chinese cities and you go back in time," said Peter Hotez, a Yale University pediatric epidemiologist and one of the world's few hookworm experts. "The great cities in China are very modern, as modern in some ways as Los Angeles. But two hours away, nothing has changed in a very long time, and people are still using human feces as fertilizer."

Hookworm expert Peter Hotez with children in Zhongzhou village PHOTOGRAPH: STEVEN MUFSON

In May, Hotez journeyed to one of the villages south of Wuhu in search of worms. He traveled two hours by car, then took a pleasant walk through fields bursting with yellow rapeseed plants. A rusty metal boat carried him across a tributary of the Yangtze River, then he took another short walk to Zhongzhou village, where the muddy streets are shared by pigs, cows and people, most of whom had never seen a Caucasian person, much less one dressed in corduroy pants, tie and blazer.

A survey in March indicated that 36 percent of the 2,567 people who live in this village in the southern corner of China's Anhui province have hookworms.

"These are the exact same conditions we use at the lab to cultivate hookworm," Hotez said as he passed the fecund fields, which will soon be full of tobacco and cotton.

Hookworm, which Hotez estimates infects up to a billion people worldwide, was once common in the American South. The fight against hookworm was one of the first aims of what later became the Rockefeller Foundation. The worm vanished in the United States early this century as sanitation improved.

MAGNIFIED, the worms look menacing, with tapered bodies and sharp teeth. The worms, which can measure anywhere from a half-inch long to four inches, suck blood from their human hosts, causing anemia, stunting their growth and damaging their intellectual capacity. Although one worm does little harm, a person with hookworm could have hundreds or thousands of them and lose as much as a cup of blood a day, causing severe loss of iron and protein.

Although treatable, hookworm tends to reinfect people who continue the same habits that caused them to contract schistosomiasis in the first place. The worms like damp, cool places, and fields of rapeseed, cotton and tobacco are ideal. Eggs deposited in the soil develop into larvae, which are swallowed or attach to passing humans or animals and penetrate the skin.

Once in the bloodstream, the larvae pass through the heart and into the lungs and airways, where they are coughed up and swallowed. When they reach the small intestine, the larvae mature into adult worms and attach themselves to the intestinal wall. Adult worms live an average of four to five years.

To combat the disease, Hotez is trying to create a vaccine. To do that, he has to figure out why some people get hookworm while others in the same village do not, and why some people get mild cases and others are afflicted more severely. If he can identify what makes people less susceptible, he can isolate it and put it into a vaccine.

Hotez said he has four or five candidates for a hookworm antigen that have produced "promising" responses in mice. He hopes to raise funds to try to develop a vaccine. But many American foundations have moved away from funding basic scientific research in favor of health-care policy studies. Even though one in five people on the planet has hookworm, big drug companies do not want to fund hookworm research because the people who have hookworm — the poor of China and India — can't afford to buy a drug even if someone like Hotez can develop one.

The Institute of Parasitology in Wuhu is like a museum of intestinal worms. Fingernail-size hookworms are preserved in small vials. Giant lung flukes that cause pulmonary disease are preserved in large jars.

Facilities for examining and testing new samples, however, are rudimentary. China has paid scant attention to the problem of parasitic diseases as it focuses on industrial development. Training for the most part is poor, and researchers have at best a rudimentary idea of how to approach the problem.

At the county branch of Anhui's parasite-control bureaucracy, Hotez examined a map of Zhongzhou village and urged health workers to identify which households have the most cases of hookworm. He wants them to return and take blood samples from children, who were left out of the initial survey. When he got to the village, he understood one reason why. No one had needles the right size for children.

One thing that could change the parasitic map of China is the construction of the giant Three Gorges Dam across the Yangtze River. At the moment, the natural gorges, forming a relatively steep and rocky section of the mighty waterway, divide China into different parasitic regions, effectively quarantining areas above the gorges from those below.

"The Three Gorges act like a meat grinder. Nothing survives going down the Three Gorges," said George Davis of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. "The parasites above the gorges have their own genetics, and those below have theirs."

But after the dam is built, parasites will be able to travel up and down the river through the new ship channel. Above the dam, a huge reservoir will be created, a perfect habitat for the snails that cause schistosomiasis.

"No one can definitely say what will happen," said Feng Zheng, a doctor at the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine in Shanghai.

Amish on Drugs Charges

Hanna Rosin

FEDERAL prosecutors in Pennsylvania last week accused two Amish men of buying cocaine from a gang called the Pagan Motorcycle Club and distributing the drug to other young members of the religious group at parties known as "hoedowns."

"We've seen plenty of underage drinking cases but a drug case is unheard of" among the Amish, said John Pyfer, who is representing Abner Stoltzfus, 24. The other defendant is Abner King Stoltzfus, 23, who is no relation.

The case in Lancaster County underscores the vulnerability of the Amish, who have seen suburban development and tourism encroach on their once secluded lives. Members of the sect do not have electricity or plumbing in their homes, and still make their way around the county in horse-drawn buggies. The two men accused belong to the most conservative Amish sect, the Old Order Amish.

The two men were indicted last week on charges of participating in a conspiracy to distribute more than $1 million worth of cocaine and methamphetamine. Federal prosecutors placed most of the blame on eight members of the motorcycle gang, who were described as reckless and violent.

Pyfer said "it was pretty clear" his client had been addicted to cocaine, although he no longer is. No date has been set for the arraignment, but Pyfer said his client would plead not guilty.

During the five years the two men were allegedly distributing cocaine, they were participating in an Amish rite of passage translated loosely in English as "sowing your wild oats," said Pyfer. Amish men between the ages of 16 and 24 take a long break from the rigid rules of the community to decide if they want to opt out. During the break, the men drink and drive "bright, gaudy cars," said Pyfer, while "their parents are looking the other way." Taking drugs is not an accepted part of that rite, however.

Israel and Lebanon Swap Corpses

Lee Hockstader in Jerusalem

ISRAEL took delivery last week of a ghastly cargo: the mangled remains of Sgt. 1st Class Itamar Ilya, a commando torn to pieces in fighting last fall in southern Lebanon. In return, Israel is handing over the corpses of 40 Lebanese guerrillas. Another 60 Lebanese prisoners also are being released.

At first glance it appears to be a lopsided deal. But in the morbid arithmetic of the war in southern Lebanon — where prisoners and body parts are instantly transformed into bargaining chips — the swap has a certain symmetry. For years, Israel has gone to astonishing lengths to recover its soldiers taken prisoner or left as casualties. In 1985, it gave up 1,150 Lebanese prisoners for three Israelis. In the last such trade two years ago, the bodies of two Israeli servicemen killed in southern Lebanon were exchanged for the remains of 123 Lebanese.

"For us every combatant, every soldier in the army, every missing soldier, every prisoner of war — it's our obligation to find him and return him to his country and to his family," said the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, himself a former officer in an elite Israeli commando unit.

The grisly commerce in corpses and prisoners put an end to weeks of anticipation in the Israeli media, capped by live television coverage of the arrival in Israel of a French military plane from Beirut bearing Ilya's remains and, apparently, body parts of several other Israeli troops. The same plane was to return to Beirut with the bodies of 40 Lebanese guerrillas.

But even as the deal unfolded, the fighting in Lebanon continued to exact its toll in Israeli lives and blood. Last week, a roadside bomb in the portion of southern Lebanon occupied by Israeli forces as a "security zone" killed two more Israeli soldiers and wounded four.

That brings Israeli casualties in southern Lebanon this year to eight killed and 66 wounded in a steady war of attrition that the Jewish state has found more and more difficult to stomach. "I haven't even the shadow of a doubt that we need to . . . put our heads together and figure out a way to get out of [Lebanon], because it cannot go on like this," President Ezer Weizman said.

The circumstances surrounding the latest swap were unusual in several ways.

The ambush last September that killed Ilya, a 21-year-old Israeli commando, also took the lives of 11 other Israeli soldiers. All the bodies except Ilya's were recovered in an Israeli helicopter rescue operation. But the clash represented Israel's worst combat loss in a decade, and intensified the national debate about the Israeli military presence in Lebanon.

Delighting in their success, Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hezbollah guerrilla group had displayed the head, legs and hands of the Israeli victim.

Almost immediately, bargaining began for the return of the remains. Within weeks, the Israelis secured an impressive bit of leverage of their own: the corpse of 18-year-old Hadi Nasrallah, son of Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

To welcome home the bodies of their fallen comrades, Hezbollah hung banners and posters displaying Kalashnikov assault rifles along the route that would carry them from the Beirut airport into the city.

Hindu Activists Flex Their Muscles

Kenneth J. Cooper in Ahmadabad

PEPSI and Coke trucks have been intercepted and robbed, and a Baskin-Robbins ice cream shop has been torched. Christian services have been disrupted, and the home of India's most famous artist, a Muslim, has been ransacked.

Since the Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP, rose to national power three months ago, Hindu activists have been on the march — sometimes violently — in states governed by the Hindu nationalist party. Activists allied with the BJP recently have vandalized American consumer products to protest U.S. sanctions against India for conducting five underground nuclear tests in May.

"Pepsi and Coke are the pride of America . . . their spinal cord. We have to break this," explained Anil Jha, president of the student body at Delhi University, where last month students smashed bottles of Coca-Cola and ransacked campus canteens that served the soft drinks.

At the university in the nation's capital, a student body controlled by the party's campus chapter has led the anti-American protests — a rare instance where the party's connection to such violence has been indisputable. Elsewhere, Hindu activists assembled under the banner of allied groups have done the vandalizing, allowing BJP leaders to disavow criminal involvement.

The BJP government led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is sending out two messages. On one hand, party officials have typically stopped short of condemning the violent protests, and Vajpayee's budget seeks to promote economic self-reliance with an 8 percent increase in import duties. On the other, the government has approved 50 projects totaling more than $600 million in new foreign investment, and plans for increased investment to help blunt the impact of the new sanctions.

But the government's promise to eliminate bureaucratic snags may not be enough to woo foreign investors whose attraction to the nation's large consumer market already had begun to wane.

U.S. companies that came to India after a previous government opened the economy wider in 1991 have played down Hindu nationalist attacks for fear of provoking an even stronger reaction.

The anti-American protests have been centered in Ahmadabad, a textile center where Mohandas K. Gandhi conceived self-reliance, or swadeshi in the Hindi language, to challenge British colonial rule. Today, Ahmadabad is the largest city in Gujarat, one of a half-dozen states governed by the BJP.

In what appeared to be a well-planned attack, young men riding on three motor scooters pulled alongside a Pepsi truck a week after the nuclear tests and chanted anti-American slogans, drawing a crowd that hauled away crates of the soft drink. The next day, a half-dozen young men intercepted another Pepsi truck, breaking bottles and setting fire to the truck. A Coke truck was robbed and stoned a few days later, but the company did not complain to police.

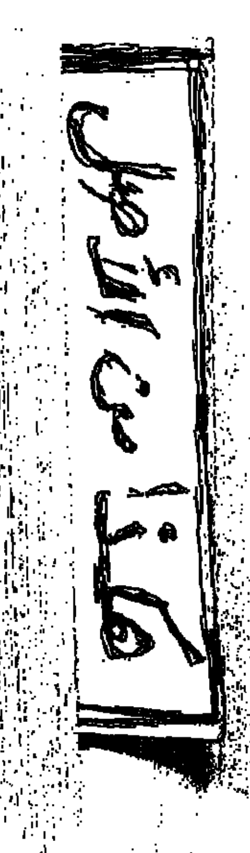
Local newspapers attributed the attacks to the Bajrang Dal, a militant youth group that — like the BJP — is affiliated with a Hindu nationalist brotherhood. Police arrested 16 people on robbery charges in connection with the Pepsi truck attacks and briefly provided additional patrols on some routes.

In March, as vote-counting showed the BJP emerging as parliament's largest party, Hindu nationalists disrupted a Christian prayer service in Baroda, another city in Gujarat state. Activists barged into the service and assaulted Pentecostal worshippers.

Other attacks on Christians have occurred this year in western Maharashtra and northern Uttar Pradesh states.

In Maharashtra, Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray has called for a boycott of Coke and Pepsi to protest the sanctions.

In early May, Hindu activists threatened M.F. Hussain, India's most prominent artist, and ransacked his Bombay home because he painted a Hindu goddess in the nude. The assailants considered the painting sacrilegious even though the Hindu pantheon were naked in classical renderings and became clothed only after Indian artists came under the influence of British Victorian values. Hussain later apologized for offending Hindu sensibilities.



Reports From the Edge of Reality

A.S. Byatt

THE KNIFE THROWER
And Other Stories
By Steven Millhauser
Crown. 256pp. $22

WHEN Steven Millhauser won the Pulitzer Prize last year, it was for Martin Dressler, a taut, realistic novel set in turn-of-the-century Manhattan. In contrast, the best, and strangest, of his curious and tantalizing new stories are dreamy tales of altered consciousnesses — a child on a flying carpet, a balloon navigator in the Franco-Prussian War; the most original and successful are written in the first person plural. They are told by dry, anonymous voices: by people who are at once a community and an audience, since the stories are characteristically about peep shows, pleasure domes and performances.

They recount, in a sense, the communal fantasies of a democracy. They have a characteristic modern tone of commentary, or record, or journalism — they occasionally include imaginary reporting in their accounts. But what they tell is like Hawthorne, Hoffman and Kafka.

The title story is about a performance by a virtuoso knife thrower, Hensch, maker of precise bloody marks. It moves from skill to the fulfillment of secret desires, in the audience and in those members of the audience who volunteer as targets. It steps beyond the bounds of the comfortable, and the shrewd, complicit representative voice goes with it. "The Sisterhood of Night" describes, precisely and dryly, the rumors and theories surrounding a secret society of girls aged 12 to 15 who meet in silence at night in a small town. The voices are a blend of gossip and reportage. The girls may be doing something unacceptable or nothing at all. There may be a witch hunt in the making. Or the whole thing may merely be a comic fuss about adolescent secret societies.

The best stories of all add to the communal whisper an interest in artifacts, constructions, inventions, mostly those constructed by our grandparents in the days of clockwork and early technologies. In Little Kingdoms Millhauser wrote brilliantly about the real and unreal forms of the first animated cartoons, a new kind of two-dimensional imaginary world for the mind to inhabit. Here "The New Automaton Theater" tells the tale of a German city proud of its miniature theaters, and the career of a master automaton maker who moves from perfect miniature verisimilitude to grotesque caricature. The anonymous narrative voice analyzes the pleasure in miniaturization, the pleasure in likeness, the pleasure in unlikeness. "The real is used to bring forth the unreal," it says.

In "The Dream of the Consortium" Millhauser has created what must be the ultimate version of that minor genre, the department store fiction. The consortium buys the department store and makes in it a fantasy world where the consumer may purchase anything he wants, enter a reconstruction of any time or place he chooses. Millhauser's own ingenuity is delicious — he moves from catalogues of objects where the precision of his own solid imagination is the pleasure, to huge impossible commercial projects, to a metaphysical version of the sense we all have in shopping malls that there is no way out of these alleys and vistas of requited desire and artificial paradises. His eclectic lists are dizzying: "you could purchase quartz heaters, power mowers, Venetian palazzi, electric pencil sharpeners, Scottish castles, cordless phones with ten-channel autoscan, flying buttresses, mulching tractors . . . lagoons, sphinxes, exercycles, black leather recliners, Upper Palaeolithic Caves with drawings of bisons . . ." and on and on.

The strength and glitter of his imaginative grip lies in Millhauser's ability to weave detail into detail, the lovingly real and possible into the extravagantly impossible, created with the same imaginative precision.

What is the fascination of these communal artifacts? I think that we as a group feel a kind of horror, as well as an aesthetic admiration, at skill in puppetry, automation, mimicry. We are troubled by arts like knife-throwing, which make artificial plays with real dangers. Millhauser's world is the imaginary world that once held angels and demons, mythic beasts and gardens, heaven and hell. The imagery of our human frontiers, upward and downward — the blue heaven above and the cavern below — appears with surprising constancy in his tales. His characters soar into the blue, stepping off gables a[…] flying carpets, in hot air balloons[…] Ferris wheels. They go un[…] ground — the last tale in the b[…] "Beneath the Cellars of Our To[…] is an account of an American t[…] that tends and preserves a sy[…] of underground passages (wher[…] one ever gets lost) in order to e[…] rience again and again the pleas[…] of going into the dark, and als[…] returning to daylight and seei[…] differently.

He is not condemning the c[…] mercial or the artificial. He is […] ing them strange, celebrating t[…] true, innocent and sinister po[…] He is celebrating the arts that s[…] isfy communal desires — for go[…] for escape, for imagined e[…] wheres. He does it for the most p[…] through the artifacts of prev[…] generations, which have bec[…] part of our communal fantas[…] would be possible to relate th[…] backward-looking tales to the a[…] pation of our stepping into vir[…] worlds much as we step into ro[…] with magic windows in the corr[…] flickering images of everything […] everywhere at us, appealing to […] desire to consume. But he is […] doing what all good art doe[…] plaining art itself, how it works[…] how it works on us, how much […] why and in what riddling wa[…] need it.

The Voice Behind the Voice

Michael Dirda

PERFORMING WITHOUT A STAGE
The Art of Literary Translation
By Robert Wechsler
Catbird. 313pp. $21.95

AYLMER and Louise Maude, Ivan Morris, Archibald Colquhoun, Anthony Kerrigan, Michael Henry Heim, Richmond Lattimore, Arthur Waley, Willa and Edwin Muir, Stuart Gilbert, William Weaver, John Felstiner and, of course, Constance Garnett are all among my favorite writers. I suspect that they're favorites of yours too.

What! You're not quite sure if you know even a single one of their masterpieces? But of course you do: Anna Karenina, The Pillow Book Of Sei-Shonagon, The Leopard, Borges's ficciones, The Master And Margarita, the lyric fragments of Archilochus and Sappho, The Tale Of Genji, Kafka's metaphysical fables, The Stranger, If On A Winter's Night A Traveler, the poems of Paul Celan, and the short stories of Chekhov. Some of the greatest books in the English language.

But, but, these are all translations! Well, yes. Still, for most of us the only One Hundred Years Of Solitude we'll ever read is Gregory Rabassa's.

Yet, as Robert Wechsler reminds us in a passionate, enthralling new book, Performing Without A Stage: The Art Of Literary Translation, most translators get no respect, not to mention pitiful wages, little credit and zero public attention. Even worse, authors — often wrongly — complain about textual liberties or infidelities and reviewers dismiss months of toil with an adverb ("ably or competently or execrably rendered into English by X").

Then why does anyone bother to translate? Out of love, usually. From a desire to bring a favorite writer's work into English, or sometimes as a self-imposed artistic challenge.

Wechsler, who is editor of the Catbird Press (which specializes in Czech and German literature), has seen the indifference that hounds the modern translator. You can spend half a lifetime on a book of poems (talk to Eliot Weinberger about his work on Octavio Paz), and the author will get all the credit for these simply marvelous lyrics; you can take a year to translate a Polish classic, and nobody reviews it, hardly anyone even reads it — and those few who do point out your mistakes.

Throughout his book, Wechsler argues that a literary translator should not be regarded as a work-for-hire artisan, but rather as a performer, the actor who brings to blazing life a writer's achievement for a new audience. From this starting point, the book takes off in many directions: Wechsler discusses the tensions between form and content, compares 35 (!) different versions of a few lines from Homer's Iliad, and tots up the endless decision-making that even the simplest translating requires. "Balancing, rather than fidelity," he concludes, "is the central ethical act of translation, the act that allows for the redemption of losses, for respecting a work's integrity, for the recreation of another, freestanding work of art. Balancing is the way in which a translator meets his obligations."

Best of all, Wechsler repeatedly encourages would-be poets and novelists to take up translating as the ideal means for learning linguistic exactness. A translator, after all, must read "very, very carefully," and then just as carefully consider the nuances in an adjective, the rhythm of a sentence, the force of a comma or period.

Throughout, the tone is conversational, jargon-free, sometimes angry and frequently funny. Above all, this book is quite inspiring: After reading it, one wants to break out the dictionaries and get to work on those lyrics of Heinrich von Morungen. At the very least, Performing Without A Stage should encourage a deeper appreciation of how much we owe the people who generously bring us the world's literature.


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

Loosely Strung Together

Tamsin Todd

THE ANTELOPE WIFE
By Louise Erdrich
HarperFlamingo. 240 pp. $24

IN HER sixth novel Louise Erdrich continues to redraw contemporary America from a Native American point of view, a project she began in such novels as Love Medicine and The Bingo Palace.

The setting is Gakahbekong, or Minneapolis, a city "where everything is set out clear in lines and neatly labeled, where you can hide from the great sky, forget." But strip away the trimmings of city life and you find a vast Native history, rooted in the land: "Although driveways and houses, concrete parking garages and business stores cover the city's scape, that same land is hunched underneath," says Cally Roy, one of the novel's many narrators. "There are times, like now, I get this sense of the temporary. It could all blow off. And yet the sheer land would be left underneath. Sand, rock, the Indian black seashell-bearing earth."

The Antelope Wife tells the story of two families, the Roys and the Shawanos, brought together during a U.S. Cavalry raid on an Ojibwa village. After killing an old woman, Pvt. Scranton Roy kidnaps and raises an Ojibwa baby.

The novel focuses on Roy's descendants, whose lives seem jinxed by their ancestors' deeds. The family history is steeped in tragedy: A father inadvertently kills his daughter; a sanitation engineer kidnaps a woman from a pow wow, then turns alcoholic; a baker, in love with a woman married to another man, plays out his frustration in a lifelong quest to bake the perfect cake. Occasional moments of humor and love redeem unfulfilled desires, as when a loquacious dog tells bawdy jokes, or mistiming turns a sexy anniversary surprise into farce.

The story is told in short vignettes interspersed with meditations on beading and beadwork. Incantatory prose-poems at the beginning of each of the novel's four sections depict women beading: "The beaders have no other order at the heart of their being. Do you know that the beads are sewn onto the fabric of the earth with endless strands of human muscle, human sinew, human hair?" This story, suggests one narrator, is stru[…] gether like beads: "Everything […] knotted up in a tangle. Pull […] string of this family and the w[…] web will tremble."

It's an apt metaphor. Moti[…] the story of the antelope wi[…] piece of sweetheart calico, the […] of twin girls — recur like co[…] beads in a complicated pat[…] These patterns inform the liv[…] Erdrich's characters. Ojibwa n[…] pass, untaught, from one gener[…] to another. Contemporary cha[…] ters find guidance and directi[…] myth.

The best parts of the novel o[…] when Erdrich brings the logic of […] Native world in contact w[…] contemporary thought, as w[…] Cecille, who believes she c[…] control her destiny through kun[…] and health food, tries to ind[…] Cally's grandmothers to particip[…] in a family group therapy sess[…] This kind of juxtaposition creates […] stark and interesting texture. T[…] overall effect is powerful.

Individually, the vignettes a[…] less effective. In the early, historic[…] sections, vague and bloated la[…] guage diminishes the significan[…] of key episodes, such as this pa[…] sage in which the Antelope Wi[…] tests her adoptive father's lo[…] "Sometimes, afflicted by an anxi[…] sorrow, she holds her breath to se[…] what will happen, if he will save he[…] Heat flows up the sides of her fa[…] and she opens her lips but befo[…] her mouth can form a word sh[…] sees yellow, passes out, and i[…] flooded by blueness, sheer blu[…] ness, intimate and strange, the col[…] of her necklace of beads."

More disappointingly, many o[…] the episodes don't excite the ima[…] nation. Long, bland dialog[…] sequences reveal little about cha[…] acter. Emotions feel artificial an[…] underdeveloped. Individual cha[…] acters and episodes are so ove[…] powered by myth and fam[…] history that they fail to be interes[…] ing on their own. Like rough bead[…] they work best by contrast: Hel[…] under the light, they appear dul[…] and flawed. The large pattern o[…] the novel may be stunning, but th[…] detail leaves something to b[…] desired.



Just say no to the opiate of the euro

Larry Elliott

BACK in 1990 there was one clinching argument on the left for supporting British membership of the exchange rate mechanism. It was that Margaret Thatcher was against it.

Eight years on, we are seeing an eerie rerun of that scenario. Despite the less than glorious experience of our two years spent shackled to the German mark, the talk last week was that the left has no option but to support entry into the single currency. Why? Because Rupert Murdoch is against it.

This does not seem an altogether convincing line of argument. Mrs Thatcher may have been wrong about many things, but she was absolutely right about the ERM.

Similarly, we may be better off today listening to the Sun than to the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress, which were spectacularly wrong about the ERM in 1990 and are spectacularly wrong about European monetary union today. The CBI and the TUC have remembered nothing and forgotten everything about the events that led up to Black Wednesday.

What is really at issue is not whether Mr Murdoch is a nice man, because quite obviously he isn't. The point is whether there are convincing arguments for the left to support the single currency. There are not.

Sad to say, George Orwell was right when he talked of leftwing British intellectuals being unique in their hatred for their own country. There is an unblinking assumption that the European single currency must be good simply because it is European, and that those who oppose it are Little Englanders, xenophobes, supporters of Britain's feudal political structure, and so on.

Not for a second should we doubt that the euro's supporters fervently believe that it will lead to higher growth, higher wages and higher public spending. But this belief is based on faith alone.

Unlike the Federal Reserve, which has a mandate to run United States monetary policy with growth and inflation in mind, the European Central Bank (ECB) merely pursues price stability. However, it is that pursuit coupled with pro-cyclical fiscal policies — rather than the alleged structural problems in European labour markets — which have caused mass joblessness in Europe. Unemployment is now falling slightly; not because of reforms in labour markets but because European macroeconomic policy has become less insane.

This trend will be used by euro-supporters to suggest that Britain cannot afford to remain outside the successful experiment. But unless the ECB adopts a more expansionary approach to monetary policy and more discretion on fiscal policy is allowed, this cyclical upturn will not last much longer than in the relatively benign late 1980s. Rather than higher growth and living standards we are likely to get the opposite.

As for more generous welfare systems, the point is that the trades union movement is not the driving force behind the single currency, but big business is; and what does big business want? The same as it always wants — cheaper labour, lower taxes, smaller welfare states and freedom of action for capital.

A body of opinion on the far left sees it as an advantage that capitalism will be encouraged to organise on a pan-European basis, because that will encourage labour to follow suit. According to the theory, the solidarity of the working class will be strengthened and the day of revolution hastened. Most who think this way, however, spent their formative years in the hallucinogenic confusion of the late 1960s.

A soft-left variant of this is that the single currency will insulate Europe against the excesses of American-style capitalism. This is a dangerous folly.

It is not the American free-marketeers who have undermined social democracy in Europe but those who have spent 15 years following barking-mad macroeconomic policies in pursuit of monetary union. The result has been intolerably high levels of unemployment, putting pressure on welfare provision.

There is yet another argument from the pro-euro left. It is that interest rates in Britain will converge with lower rates on the European mainland. After all, short-term rates in Britain are 7.5 per cent, while in Germany and France they are less than 4 per cent. But the reason the UK has higher interest rates is that economic conditions are different. Indeed, the lack of convergence was the main reason behind the British government's decision to delay entry. But just as a stopped clock is right twice a day, so there is no guarantee that having converged with the rest of Europe in 2001, Britain will stay converged.

THE Emu

CENTRAL BANKER ATE MY WAGES

THIS brings us to the main point: whether Europe is what economists call an optimal currency area. What happens if parts of the "euro-zone" disengage, so one country grows more slowly with higher unemployment?

Outside monetary union, the answer is simple: the Bank of England adjusts monetary policy for cheaper borrowing and a more competitive pound — as the Tories did with instant results on Black Wednesday.

Inside monetary union this option is not open. In principle British workers could apply for jobs in Belgium or Portugal, but unless they speak fluent Flemish, French or Portuguese they may have some problems keeping a job.

Failing that, there is, in theory at least, the possibility that the rich parts of Europe will rush to the rescue of the poorer regions through a system of large-scale fiscal transfers. But to be effective it would require a budget 10 times that wielded by Brussels — and, even more important, a much greater sense of political unity than exists — or is ever likely to exist — between member states.

If neither of these escape routes is open, does that mean that there is no alternative but to accept higher levels of unemployment? Not necessarily. There is a final way of reducing unit-labour costs and restoring competitiveness — the workers can take a pay-cut.

There is no guarantee that this will happen, of course. It may be that the Thatcherite supply-side reforms have re-energised Britain. It may also be the case that — despite giving the impression that they would struggle to run a bath — those charged with implementing Euro-monetarism really do know how to deliver higher growth.

But if things do not quite go according to plan, it will be fascinating to see how the trades union bosses, now so keen to sign up for the euro, explain to their dwindling band of members that the glorious victory over Mr Murdoch has been won at the expense of their living standards.

Japan ready to bite the banking bullet

TOKYO NOTEBOOK
Alex Brummer

THE signs are that the Japanese government is finally facing up to the reality of its financial crisis. Unless it fixes banking — as it promised its partners in the Group of Seven industrialised nations — the threat posed to the economy is almost too ghastly to contemplate.

The proposed merger between the troubled Long Term Credit Bank of Japan and Sumitomo Trust & Banking, regarded as one of the healthier banking groups, represents a step along the learning curve.

The government of Ryutoro Hashimoto, which has wrestled control of the banking crisis away from the once-omnipotent ministry of finance, seems to have a sensible strategy in its grasp.

It knows that simply to allow the LTCB to fail would be a mistake. So it has conducted talks with potential partners behind the scenes with the aim of preserving LTCB's good business but shedding its bad loans.

What it has been anxious to avoid is the mess that followed the decisions to allow securities firm Yamaimichi and the city bank, Hokkaido, to go to the wall.

Last week the prime minister conducted a series of meetings with cabinet and monetary officials to hammer out a "total plan" to resolve the crisis.

The Bank of Japan and the new regulator, the Financial Supervisory Authority, are insisting on an approach based on the American model of full disclosure, with traditional forces within the discredited ministry of finance advocating a more cautious method.

The ruling Liberal Democratic party has promised to bring forward the plan by next week. There has been much speculation that if and when disclosure is enforced, it might provide a rare chance for foreign financial operations to become a significant presence in Tokyo. Investment bank Merrill Lynch has already blazed a trail, buying the assets and business of Yamaimichi Securities.

Other US financial groups have also seen a chance. America's most aggressive financial conglomerate, Travelers — now merging with Citibank — has bought into Nikko Securities.

In the insurance area the American Insurance Group has launched a bold attempt to join Japan's largest insurers with an offer for Aoba, which could be worth as much as $1 billion.

The government is flirting with other options for dealing with bad loans, including absorbing them through government-controlled financial groups. But as seen in the securities and insurance sector, overseas groups — with the US blazing the way — will have a critical role to play.

In Brief

THE rate of UK business failures has risen for the first time since 1995, and the growth in employment is beginning to flag, according to separate surveys. This adds to pressure on the Bank of England's monetary policy committee to decide whether to change interest rates.

DOMINION Resources, US owner of East Midlands Electricity, announced the $3 billion sale of the regional British company to generating firm PowerGen. Seven of the eight UK regional electricity companies sold in recent years to US utility firms are back on the market.

MORE than $1.6 billion of nuclear contracts is at risk because holes have appeared in pipes through which highly radioactive waste is pumped inside the Thorp reprocessing plant at Sellafield. Meanwhile British Nuclear Fuels embarked on its first big overseas venture when it joined forces with US firm Morrison Knudsen to complete the $1.2 billion purchase of two key Westinghouse nuclear businesses in the US.

HYUNDAI, the South Korean industrial group, delivered a huge blow to the Scottish economy when it announced that it was to suspend "indefinitely" all building on a new plant at Dunfermline, Fife, which could have created 2,000 jobs.

SOUTH Africa became the latest country to be hit by the Asian crisis as a wave of speculation on the foreign exchanges sent the rand plummeting to a record low against the dollar.

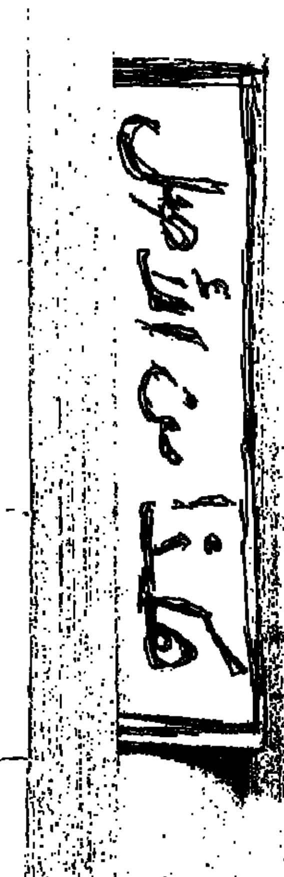
AMERICA'S largest telephone company, AT&T, announced the $48 billion purchase of cable television group Tele-Communications to create a one-stop shop for communications.

BRITISH Airways scored a victory in its campaign against state aid for airlines when judges in Luxembourg ruled against a European Commission decision to approve $3.3 billion in state aid to Air France.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates June 29	Sterling rates June 22
Australia	2.7343-2.7405	2.7464-2.7528
Austria	21.22-21.26	21.09-21.12
Belgium	62.21-62.32	61.83-61.95
Canada	2.4473-2.4507	2.4642-2.4667
Denmark	11.48-11.49	11.42-11.43
France	10.10-10.12	10.05-10.06
Germany	3.0148-3.0183	2.9996-3.0025
Hong Kong	12.89-12.90	12.94-12.95
Ireland	1.1966-1.2008	1.1905-1.1929
Italy	N/A-N/A	2,954-2,985
Japan	235.82-235.84	230.80-231.07
Netherlands	3.3984-3.4022	3.3810-3.3836
New Zealand	3.2338-3.2286	3.2529-3.2812
Norway	12.79-12.80	12.69-12.70
Portugal	308.56-309.01	307.23-307.58
Spain	255.90-256.23	254.46-254.73
Sweden	13.23-13.26	13.26-13.28
Switzerland	2.5376-2.5409	2.5030-2.5060
USA	1.6652-1.6662	1.6720-1.6730
ECU	N/A-N/A	1.5155-1.5173

FTSE 100 Share Index up [illegible] FTSE 250 Index down 40.6 at [illegible] Gold down [illegible]



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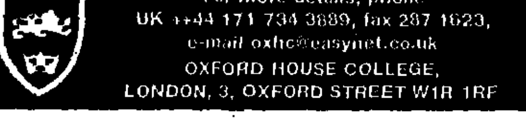
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The Guardian Weekly

Heroin hooks children of Russia's new élite

James Meek in Moscow

THE WEALTHY young patients at the Kundola medical centre, in thick woods outside the Russian capital, live according to a strict regime. Their comfortable suites in the clean, bright clinic in a heavily-guarded compound have the air of a gilded cage.

The 24-hour security cordon and camera-monitored perimeter fence exist not to stop them running away, nor to protect them from attack, but to defend them against the temptation that brought them here: heroin, which dealers and friends of the addicts have been known to smuggle in or throw over the fence.

The Kundola centre, where a three-week course of treatment costs at least $4,000 — more than an average Russian earns in a year — is a symptom of the drugs craze blighting the children of Russia's richest families.

Yakov Marshak, a senior doctor at the clinic, said the youngest patient they had treated was 12.

"She didn't want to be cured. While she was here she dreamed about drugs; drugs were the best thing in the world. She was very hostile," he said. "But surprisingly, we managed to get her off drugs for several months."

The fashion for hard drugs among the hedonistic offspring of the rich hit the headlines in May when Liza Berezovsky, daughter of billionaire politician Boris Berezovsky, was arrested by police in St Petersburg for possession of cocaine.

Berezovsky, aged 27, a Cambridge graduate, artist and buyer of British art, is a member of the *tusovshchiki* — the "shuffled ones". This is the name given to young people who frequent nightclubs in Moscow and St Petersburg, switching venues and drugs as fashions change.

Russian newspapers reported that Berezovsky was held overnight and released on bail after voluntarily surrendering 0.85 grammes of cocaine. Her boyfriend, Ilya Voznesensky, a model and great-grandson of Joseph Stalin, was also detained after police confronted them at a nightclub.

Russia has some of the harshest drug laws in the world. Recently they were tightened still further to criminalise not only dealing and possession but also use, making it possible to imprison anyone who tests positive for drugs, or admits to having used drugs. But few believe the tough stance will get more people off drugs.

Statistics are unreliable, but it is believed that heroin users number millions and, with needle-sharing rampant, the Aids virus is spreading rapidly. Drugs appear to have tightened their grip on the bored, Western-educated children of the élite.

Ben Aris, a contributor to a new Time Out guide to the Russian capital, wrote in the English-language daily Moscow Times: "Moscow met heroin again around 1996. Within six months a big chunk of clubland was hooked, but by mid-1997 heroin usage was petering out. There are still about 2 million junkies in Russia, but at least heroin is not fashionable any more. Coke is fashionable."

Fashionable or not, nine out of 10 patients at the Kundola centre are heroin addicts. Dr Marshak cures them by diet, the anti-opiate drug naltrexon, the 12-step programme followed by Alcoholics Anonymous and yoga exercises.

Dr Marshak also counsels distraught parents who find it difficult to believe that their children are spending their new wealth on drugs.

Wasted youth . . . Politician Boris Berezovsky with daughter Liza who was arrested on drug charges in May PHOTOGRAPH: IGOR TAS

"I would never have dreamt that there were such wealthy people," Dr Marshak said. "One father tried flying his daughter around the world, moving her every three days . . . to cure her. But every time he brought her to a country where she didn't speak the language and didn't know anyone, by evening she would find out where the drugs were."

The Swiss solution

Gary Younge reports on Zurich's new way forward in the war against drugs

MATTHEUS has a lid on things. Every morning he wakes up in a flat he has kept for years, to a steady job and a long-term relationship. The health authorities in Zurich are keen to make sure that he stays that way. So at 8 o'clock every morning, on his way to work, and then at six every evening on his way home, he drops off at a local clinic so the state can provide him with heroin.

Without it Mattheus, a long-term addict, says he couldn't function. He would spend his entire time looking for drugs or the money to buy them. With it he says he has the "rest and a regulated lifestyle" he needs and is out of the drugs scene altogether. Within two years he hopes to be drug free.

Switzerland, a country notorious for its soporific purity, is experimenting with drugs again. The nation's largest city, Zurich, is once again at the forefront. Mattheus is one of some 200 long-term heroin addicts in Zurich who has benefited from a national programme of giving a small number of addicts the drugs they need to get through the day — a scheme that has slashed crime rates and increased employment in the city among a group which until recently had been written off.

"We still believe that a life dependent on drugs is not a good life," says Rosann Waldvogel, who is the head of the town's heroin project. "So the aim is not to encourage dependency. But these are a very specific group of people. They have been addicts for a long time and all other attempts to wean them off drugs have failed. We don't just hand out heroin either. In order to get it they have to come in for other forms of help as well. There are meetings with social workers, nutritional advice, therapy and so on."

The results have been impressive. The number of those who took part in the scheme with permanent jobs rose from 14 per cent to 32 per cent; unemployment dropped from 44 per cent to 20 per cent; and the share of those involved in theft and drugs plummeted from 69 per cent to 10 per cent.

Eveline Gugger, who has been a heroin addict for 11 years and has been getting her supplies from the state for four years, has reduced her intake by two-thirds, moved off the streets and into a flat and got a job.

"This scheme has saved my life," she says. "I can live a life I never lived before."

The last time Zurich adopted an innovative approach to drugs the result was a disaster known throughout Europe as Needle Park

The same targeting might work in Britain. The Swiss model is partly based on the experience of a similar project in Liverpool which produced less dramatic but encouraging results, but was not taken up nationally. Most of the $6.5 billion of drug-related crime in Britain is caused by about 200,000 addicts. But the project in Switzerland was a political experiment as much as a medical one. For such a scheme to work it demands that authorities acknowledge, as a starting point, that some people will take drugs regardless of prevention programmes and stiff sentences.

Britain, however, has chosen to follow the American route of zero tolerance, which blurs the lines between soft and hard drugs and treats most attempts to co-opt drug addicts as a tacit acceptance that the war has been lost. More than 60 per cent of the annual drugs bill in Britain is spent on law enforcement, compared with 13 per cent on treatment programmes and 12 per cent on education.

Part of the success, says Professor Gutzwiller, professor of preventative medicine at the University of Zurich, has been the scheme's ability to target those most in need. "These are the people who are the sickest and in social terms the most problematic: people with no relations outside of the drugs scene who are the most desperate and therefore the most likely to resort to theft and prostitution."

The programme has also freed up resources in other drug programmes for less severely dependent addicts. Programmes previously spent much time and energy on trying to rehabilitate users who were never going to come off drugs through orthodox methods.

The last time Zurich adopted an innovative approach to its drugs problem things did not go so well. During the nineties the city had a policy of trying to contain open drug use in a confined area so that it could be treated more easily and would be forced out of the underground. The result was a disaster known throughout Europe as Needle Park: a small stretch of grass behind the Landes-museum that attracted around 2,000 people a day to come and trade in drugs with that number doubling at the weekend. Inside, addicts used to lie inert on the ground, spattered with blood and strewn with needles. Outside men would wait for young women who would prostitute themselves so that they could get their next fix.

Little wonder then that the latest policy, launched in 1994, proved to be controversial. A group called Youth Without Drugs challenged the plan, preached abstinence and gathered 100,000 signatures to put the question to a referendum. Drawing on the failure of Needle Park — which has since been cleared, renovated and returned to its former serenity in the middle of lake Zurich — the campaigners' message was simple: "You can't fight drugs by giving them away free," said one leader.

But the referendum, in September last year, delivered a crushing defeat to the nay-sayers with 70 per cent of voters backing the new plan. "I have been in this job 11 years and I cannot explain why we won by so much. I was shocked. I thought maybe we would win but not by this much. We even won in rural areas where people are more conservative and don't have much of a drugs problem. I think people saw that it was a complicated issue and recognised that it needed a complicated response," says Waldvogel.

The programmes do not hold the sole responsibility for this. The culture of drug dealing has also changed over the past decade. From shady deals on ill-lit streets to deliveries ordered by mobile phones and pager requests.

While the new policy has reduced the number of addicts coming to the city there is little evidence yet that it has actually reduced the number of addicts in Zurich. Its proponents say it is not supposed to: "It is part of a four-point plan, along with therapy, prevention and repression. What it has done is close down the open drugs scene, made drugs less generally available and removed what was a real problem for the general public," says Waldvogel.

Almost. An evening trip to the tramway stop where Langstrasse meets Limatplatz will suffice to show that there are still individuals dealing openly in the streets of Zurich. But compared with the brazen nature of the bad old days, the nocturnal scenes at Limatplatz show a marked improvement, local experts say. So marked, in fact, that the authorities in Amsterdam — a group who have dabbled in innovative drugs policies for so long you would have thought there was little more they could learn — are about to follow suit.

Once again they will concentrate on long-term addicts who have not responded to other forms of therapy. But unlike the Swiss, fashion is helping to regulate the Amsterdam drug scene all by itself. "Young people are not interested in heroin any more. They see it as a loser's drug for old men and one that doesn't fit in very well with the music scene. They prefer cannabis or Ecstasy and with these two drugs addiction is not really a problem," says R Kesemakers, the spokesman for the Yellineck drug clinic.

Since the early eighties the number of registered heroin addicts has almost halved in Amsterdam and every year the average age of the addicts gets older.

From the coffee shops around the city centre, most of which are filled with young Americans, Britons and Germans enjoying a country where certain premises are legally permitted to sell cannabis, it is clear that a form of drugs tourism still brings many people to the city. But the days of Amsterdam acting like a magnet for the flotsam and jetsam of the continent's failed rehabilitation attempts have long gone. The city is treating the lowest number of foreigners for drug related problems since 1979, said one official.

With Ecstasy testing kits in nightclubs, and cafés with names like Mellow Yellow, officials in Amsterdam also believe their liberal attitude towards softer drugs has helped stop those who take soft drugs being led astray and wandering into addiction with harder ones.

"Here, if you want cannabis you go to a coffee shop. In other countries if you want it you have to go to a man who might try to sell you heroin or cocaine as well. It separates the two scenes completely," says Von Brussels, a doctor with the Amsterdam drug department.

Road accidents kill or disable more people than TB, war or HIV — and the Red Cross wants action. **Oliver Tickell** reports

Death duties

A MOTOR rickshaw swerves to avoid an overtaking bus on a main road in Delhi. Only too late does the overworked driver see the elderly Sikh on a motor scooter pulling out of a side street. The Sikh is thrown clear of his machine, breaking a leg and striking his head on the kerb. Thanks to his turban, he survives.

The rickshaw is catapulted on to the crowded pavement, crushing an eight-year-old boy selling chewing gum. The young rickshaw driver leaps from the cab and runs to escape the angry crowd. His middle-aged passenger, knocked unconscious and trapped in the vehicle, is not so lucky: petrol spills out of a ruptured fuel line on to the hot two-stroke engine and ignites.

Another two people die on the roads of Delhi. Another cost is tallied on India's road-accident bill, estimated at more than $3 billion a year. An hour later, at New Delhi's busy ITO Crossing, the cricket-style noticeboard announcing the daily death toll on the city's roads marks up another two victims. It is a bad day, maybe something to do with the suffocating summer heat. Five dead and still only 6pm. The average daily total so far this year is 3.1, with three out of four victims pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.

Since the car first killed, at Crystal Palace, London, in 1898 (the victim a pedestrian), motor vehicles have claimed 30 million lives in accidents alone. By 1990 traffic accidents had become the ninth-greatest cause of death worldwide, killing 500,000 people a year and injuring 15 million, most in developing countries such as India. That's a death every minute of the day and night, and an injury every two seconds. Worldwide, road accidents are now the single biggest cause of death of men aged 15 to 44.

Yet the carnage has only just begun. By 2020, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies announces in its 1998 World Disasters Report, traffic accidents will take third place in the world league for death and disability, ahead of respiratory infections (a lot exacerbated by traffic pollution), tuberculosis, war and HIV. Most of those killed will be the most vulnerable people from the world's poorest countries.

Road accidents in the developed world have been declining for 30 years. Between 1965 and 1994 the number of vehicles on Britain's roads doubled, but accidents more than halved, the result of public education, drink-driving laws, safer road design, vehicle safety regulations and the abandonment of the most dangerous roads by children, cyclists and pedestrians. Road deaths in most developed countries are down to under five per 10,000 registered vehicles a year, and just two in Japan and Australia.

It's a different story in the developing world: India scores 40 deaths a year per 10,000 vehicles, Bangladesh 77, Ghana 111 and Ethiopia 192. Despite far more vehicles, Europe and North America combined have under half the deaths of Asia, Africa and South America.

World traffic volumes are forecast to double between 1990 and 2020 to some 50 billion passenger kilometres, then double again by 2050, with the biggest increases in developing countries. The number of traffic accidents in those countries is set to soar.

It is impossible to assess the global sum of misery. But the Red Cross has calculated the economic cost in terms of lost years of work (an average of 25 years per fatality), medical expenses and property damage, to arrive at $53 billion a year in developing countries — equivalent to the entire international aid they receive. The Red Cross is doing its bit to heal the wounds. Colombia is known as one of the world's most dangerous countries, yet 70 per cent of those helped by the Colombian Red Cross in Bogotá last year — disaster relief excepted — were victims of traffic accidents, many involving drunk drivers.

In response to the rising toll, the Bogotá Red Cross's Cundinamarca chapter and doctors from the Emergency Medical Attention Service started an accident rescue programme financed through vehicle insurance.

The Red Cross is developing similar road-accident services in south Asia, including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. And it is desperately combating the regional shortage of blood for transfusion, building up a network of volunteer donors, testing the blood for a host of viruses, and providing it where needed free of charge.

But as Geoffrey Dennis, head of the South Asia delegation says, the Red Cross cannot merely help road accident victims without addressing the causes. Over recent years Britain has spent about $1.6 billion a year on road safety, which the Red Cross describes as a "cost-effective investment with a high rate of return".

Now, it argues, developing countries too should commit serious resources to preventing accidents. Such spending, the Red Cross says, should focus on measures such as brighter street lights, safer junction designs, traffic calming and the segregation of fast and slow-moving vehicles. Public education is important, too — for children in particular, and for drivers acclimatised to a culture of risk-taking.

"The system here is that the bigger vehicle goes first, never mind the right of way," says Dennis. Such driving habits can only be changed by education, backed by police enforcement of regulations and speed limits.

Improving vehicle safety, by contrast, is a mixed blessing. "Vehicle safety seems to bring more danger, especially for those already most vulnerable, such as pedestrians or bicycles," the Red Cross document says of features that increase driver safety such as improved brakes and seatbelts. However, "pedestrian-friendly" bumpers and vehicle fronts can save lives.

The Red Cross's advice is eminently sensible, but one vital element is missing from its report. Traffic volumes and vehicle numbers may quadruple by 2050, but this is not fact. It appears likely because transport policies in developing countries favour motor vehicles over cyclists and pedestrians.

Cash-starved Calcutta, for example, is funding a gargantuan new road infrastructure with motorways and flyovers. There would be no room in the city centre for cycle rickshaws, which are silent, non-polluting and offer basic livelihoods for society's poorest; they have long been banned from the main avenues of New Delhi.

The Red Cross deserves praise for its emergency services, and for advocating safer road design. No less important, it should encourage governments to choose sustainable modes of transport development that will benefit all citizens.

Dennis accepts the criticism. "We are putting a sticking plaster on a running sore. Long term, we need to solve traffic problems in cities all over South Asia — and the world. It won't be easy. It's not a problem we have solved even in the UK."

Cyclists in the crowded streets of developing countries, like these in Varanasi, India, are most at risk from accidents with motor vehicles, which claim 500,000 lives a year worldwide PHOTO: STEPHEN PARKER

So whose wildlife is it anyway?

George Monbiot attacks Botswana's draconian approach to conservation in the Kalahari Reserve

PROFESSOR Bernhard Grzimek is revered as the father of East African conservation. The film he made with his son Michael, Serengeti Shall Not Die, won the 1959 Oscar for best documentary, and his book of the same title is still widely read.

Grzimek consolidated a form of conservation that has prevailed all over Africa and other parts of the developing world. "A national park," he wrote, "must remain a primordial wilderness to be effective. No men, not even native ones, should live inside its borders." His prescription, in the Serengeti and elsewhere, was enthusiastically applied. The man who had faithfully served Hitler as curator of zoology at Frankfurt rescued the East African landscape from the contamination of humankind.

There was a minor flaw in his approach. The Serengeti was not a "primordial wilderness", but one of the longest inhabited places on earth: humans had been roaming its savannahs for at least 3 million years. The people who lived there had affected the wildlife, but not to the extent of threatening the extraordinary spectacles that greeted the first European explorers.

The whites were not slow to demonstrate their appreciation of the wildlife. Within a few decades, they had gunned down most of Africa's large mammals and exterminated the blaubok and quagga.

As the herds began to disappear, the colonial authorities left no stone unturned to discover who was to blame. "Poachers", meaning African hunters, were, they decided, guilty. To protect the game, reserves were established, from which local people began to be expelled.

By the end of the second world war it was clear that without more determined intervention the animals would disappear entirely. The game reserves were gradually turned into wildlife reserves, for conservation, not hunting.

Partly as a result of Grzimek's influence more land was expropriated for new parks and reserves. The inhabitants were driven out to restore the primordial purity of the savannahs. White people continued to be allowed in, as tourists rather than hunters. The money they spent would pay for the rangers required to prevent the former inhabitants from returning.

Conserving wildlife is a worthy and respectable aim, but in African nations it is used as an excuse for theft and exploitation. The Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana was established in 1961, to provide a refuge for both wildlife and the Khwe bushmen, who are hunters and gatherers. The two aims were considered compatible: the Khwe had lived with their quarry without exterminating it since time immemorial.

There was no reason to suppose that this would change; the government agreed to share the management of the reserve's wildlife with local people. There was also the matter, usually overlooked by conservationists in Africa, of their intimate relationship with, or ownership of, the land.

But in 1986 the government decided that the people had to go. With no reputable evidence, the Khwe were pronounced a threat to wildlife. The authorities would "rescue" them from their miserable life "among animals" and integrate them into Botswanan society.

The Khwe were not keen to be rescued. They pointed out that their lives were not miserable, that the animals provided them with their livelihoods, and that it was up to them whether or not they left their land. They won the support of human rights organisations such as Survival International, and a 10-year battle ensued.

Last year police and conservation officials began pressing the Khwe to leave their homes and dumping them in a new "model village" outside the reserve. Due to an unfortunate oversight, the village had no water supply, no permanent buildings, and no economic opportunities. The government has yet to provide a convincing explanation of why the Khwe had to be moved.

Their expulsion might have something to do with the government's plans for the reserve; it intends both to allow diamond mining and to lease out large areas for luxury tourism.

Expelling the Khwe prevents the possibility that they could lay claim to the diamonds, and helps to fulfil the tourists' hopes of encountering the "primordial wilderness" with no human inhabitants that they have been led to expect.

As the Khwe bushmen's land is re-designated an exclusive playground for whites, Grzimek's ghost hovers over the Kalahari. A modern species of apartheid, engineered by a man who was a prominent Nazi, still survives in southern Africa. Its exponents call it tourism.



Bullet-proof companions

Life as a human shield is tough, but the volunteers of Peace Brigades International are ready to face the gunmen. **Mary Matheson** reports from Colombia

PACO was talking in the kitchen with Mireya Calixto, a human rights worker in northeastern Colombia, when suddenly Mireya's husband, Mario, called her name. He was in another room in their home in Sabana de Torres, with Paco's friend Hendrik, and his voice was quiet, scared and shaking. "I ran into the room and there were two gunmen, one pointing his gun at Mario and the other at Hendrik," said Paco. "We were terrified and the children started crying 'Don't kill him, don't kill him!'" As Paco coolly asked what was going on, Mario took advantage of the moment and dashed for the door.

The nervous gunmen demanded to speak to Mario, but Paco explained that he and Hendrik were Europeans. "Please leave, if you want to talk, do it in another way," said Paco calmly. And the men left.

If Paco and Hendrik had been Colombians, the gunmen would not have hesitated to spray them, and Mario, with bullets.

That, at least, is the theory of Peace Brigades International (PBI), a global human rights group employing people such as Paco and Hendrik to work as "unarmed bodyguards". There are 12 volunteers working for PBI in Colombia who "accompany" human rights defenders as they tour Colombia's villages, documenting accounts of atrocities and giving advice to locals on their legal rights.

The PBI believes that even the most hardened of killers will think twice before blowing away unarmed foreigners. "If any of us were killed it would be a huge international incident and people know that, the military know that," said Tessa MacKenzie, a 28-year-old British volunteer in Colombia.

It may sound like woolly idealism, but it is a thoroughly researched peace strategy — and it seems to work. Partly funded by UK aid agency Christian Aid, PBI has projects in Haiti, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and North America. Not one volunteer has been killed since the project began 16 years ago.

Most of the volunteers are European or North American; they are computer analysts, nurses, human rights workers, and range in age from 25 to 35. The group began its operations in Colombia in 1994, where the labyrinthine conflict pits leftwing guerrillas against a coalition of army, police and brutal death squads, with the drug trade adding a further complication.

But the armed men rarely clash, preferring to wage their bloody battle for the oil-rich zone through the civilian population. Mario Calixto, who was involved with the local human rights committee, was a marked man. And the threats against him were stepped up after the committee published a report documenting murders, torture and disappearances in 1997. Several of the cases accused the local army battalion of "disappearing" people.

The death threats against Calixto were made by paramilitaries, clandestine death squads increasingly used by the army to do their dirty work. In the second half of 1997, paramilitary groups, who go by ominous names such as "The Headcutters" or "Black Hand", stepped up their vicious extermination campaign. The links between the army and the paramilitaries have been well documented by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Paradoxically, this relationship works to PBI's advantage. Talking to the army means their message will get through to the paramilitaries — a comforting thought in a country where the violence often appears to be completely random. Working as a human shield in a country where 30,000 people are murdered each year could seem risky bordering on the foolish. But it is the physical protection offered to human rights defenders that lies at the heart of the PBI's work. They shadow some people 24 hours a day.

Osiris Bayther Ferrias is president of Credhos, a human rights group. There are times when she won't leave her house without a PBI volunteer, and if she ever leaves her hometown, Barrancabermeja, she will ask to be accompanied. She has the utmost faith in the sanctuary the unarmed bodyguards provide.

Bayther also receives death threats from the local guerrillas because her organisation has formally accused them of committing human rights abuses — a case that reveals the absurdity of linking all human rights movements to the revolutionaries.

The PBI does not confine its protection to individuals; it also tries to take care of institutions. Each day a PBI volunteer goes to the Credhos office, to give it an international "presence". Six Credhos workers were killed between 1992 and 1993, but since the PBI has offered them coverage, none has been murdered.

Although their physical presence is important, the volunteers know that the key to their strength lies in the contacts they have. "If I was just some *gringa* that happened to be following around a human rights worker, it would give them a certain amount of protection, but a very small amount," Tessa says.

The less dramatic, but just as effective, side to PBI's work is lobbying. They have a team in Bogotá that constantly meets with embassies, government representatives and, more importantly, the army.

Last October Gabriel Torres, a worker with Credhos, was detained by the army; he was falsely accused of possessing guerrilla leaflets. When the PBI heard about the arrest, the lobbying machinery was set in motion. The Dutch and Spanish ambassadors were called; they in turn called Colombia's deputy defence minister. After a few hours, Torres was being taken from his cell to be transferred to Barrancabermeja, when a soldier appeared and wearily said: "Let him go, or else we'll have those people calling us all day."

Embassy support is vital, and calms the nerves of volunteers. "It gives me confidence," Tessa says.

The presence of the volunteers has transformed the way some organisations, such as Credhos, operate. "We have been more awkward, more dangerous than we were before 1992. They now respect our lives," Bayther says.

The volunteers in Barrancabermeja have spent hours analysing what happened with Calixto. Some human rights workers believe the attack was a message sent to warn PBI, but the gunmen seemed genuinely shocked to see the foreigners. As with everything the group does, their next move was thoroughly discussed and strategically planned. Two months after the gunmen threatened Calixto, the team returned to Sabana de Torres with a commission, including embassy staff and international human rights groups.

In their year-long training the volunteers are taught how to deal with fear. Tessa, who is a British army officer's daughter, says that she can now identify the source of potential danger and can analyse situations. Volunteers are taught about two distinct types of fear: of the darkness — the unknown; and of a wild dog — a recognisable danger, open to analysis.

Hendrik reflects with a wry smile on this training. After his encounter with the gunmen, he jumped over the walls of neighbours' gardens to get to the house where he and Calixto would spend an uneasy night before leaving the town at daylight. As he was about to vault the last wall, a dog began to bark in the darkness.

Standing guard . . . Tessa MacKenzie (far left) a volunteer, watching and waiting PHOTO: MEREDITH DAVENPORT

Divorce is also a door to freedom

The moralisers ignore the facts about parents who separate, says **Polly Toynbee**

DIVORCE damages children — official. Children of divorce are twice as likely to fail at school, fail at work, take drugs, drink and smoke, suffer depression and commit suicide. So that's that. Parents who divorce are selfish, anti-social and immoral. Don't do it.

Most (but not all) research over the years has told us this, and each new study has been gleefully hailed by the moralisers. Last week Rowntree published a mighty tome surveying more than 200 studies of the effects of divorce on children. It is a great academic work — conducted by Antipodean outsiders brought in by Rowntree because they are free of British insider academic disputes over all this. Their findings raise all the troublesome old questions about sociology. How difficult it is to measure the things that really matter about human beings — what makes and mars them, why they are as they are.

Social research doesn't exist in a value-free vacuum. All these studies have been conducted in a climate of swelling moral panic about divorce. They are steeped in prevailing social attitudes and constructed to produce desired results, if unwittingly. The questions asked display the anxieties of our times and provide answers required by policymakers who are, directly or indirectly, the research paymasters.

Thus the pressing problem is whether or not divorce is damaging society. What if they had asked other questions — like what are the main causes of some children's failure? The answer would be less moral than economic and social — a picture of poverty, exclusion and diminished opportunity. But those are the very questions government in the past two decades was least anxious to ask. For social class differences between children are overwhelmingly more significant for their future lives than whether or not their parents divorce.

But divorce is what has engaged public concern, defined as a moral, not an economic problem, so government could apportion blame rather than provide solutions. Yet divorce and poverty are closely linked: the poorest couples are more likely to divorce and the divorced more likely to become poor. What's being measured — the effect of poverty or the effect of divorce?

None the less, this authoritative review of the research finds it probable that children of divorce really are twice as likely to suffer measurable bad effects. So what does that tell us? That parents shouldn't divorce? No, it can't tell us that. It simply doesn't know because it can't measure the multiple variables. However, it does conclude emphatically that only a minority of children of divorce are adversely affected. Most are no worse off. Now that's a message largely missing from most reports.

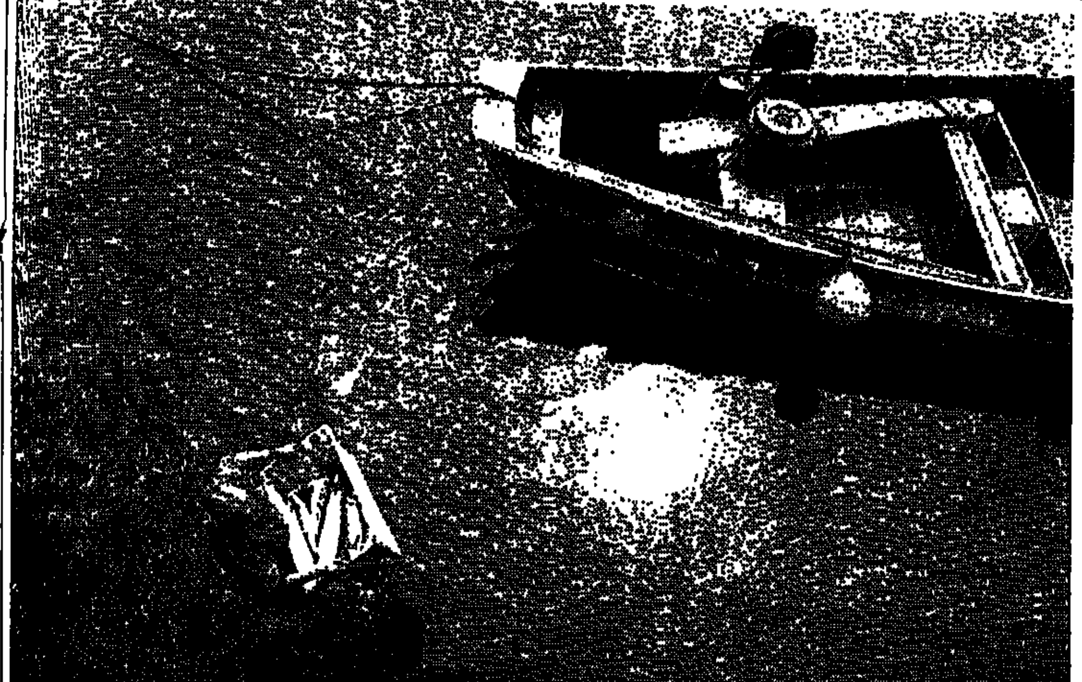
Now consider the variables that make divorce outcome statistics so utterly unreliable. Who is at most risk of divorce? The poor, people in prison, the violent, the mentally ill, drunks, addicts, gamblers, bad parents, bad spouses or anyone difficult to live with. These people may only be a minority of divorcees, but they will warp the children's outcome figures dramatically — for their children may already be damaged by their families. So this report concludes that the bare fact of divorce may tell us very little about the root causes of these children's troubles.

When unpicked, these frightening statistics look so misleading as to be virtually meaningless. They are no guide for any particular couple considering separating. For some children, as these evaluators suggest, it could be an unmixed blessing. (I put myself in that category, looking back on my parents' divorce). For others it might be a damaging tragedy.

All this is a fruitless search for unknowable truths. Time now, the report suggests, to spend money on more useful work. What can be done to lessen the damage parents do to their children, together and apart? Abandonment and rejection, they say, causes more damage than mere separation.

There is nothing governments can do to force unhappy people to live together. Moral anguish will get the state nowhere. But if they are seriously concerned about outcomes for children, there is plenty within their domain that they can do. Next time you read some catchy headline denouncing divorce as the mother of all misery, just consider that whatever harm divorce may do, it doesn't begin to compete with the damage done by poverty.

And consider something else: behind all this research there lies a naked yearning for an imaginary bygone era of marital harmony and family bliss. These studies never weigh up the value of divorce — the single greatest liberator of our times. They never assess how many millions have been freed from lives of unspeakable married misery that their ancestors were forced to suffer. Whatever the pain it causes, that is a hard-won freedom many children of divorce may also be thankful for in later life.



In deep water . . . A drift net fisherman returns with his catch of only a few sea trout PHOTO: DOUG HALL

Cross-border clash on 'plundered' salmon

Peter Hetherington

TO THE big landowners who control fishing on Britain's premier salmon river, they are the plunderers of the deep — elderly men in small boats who cast long, transparent nets out at sea and pull in hundreds of salmon.

"They're stealing our fish and threatening an industry worth millions," complains an angry representative of the aristocrats who own the best angling beats on the Tweed river. "They have to be stopped."

In turn, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations counters: "They want more fish for themselves so that they can charge higher rentals on their rivers. They're just greedy."

What began as little more than a class war between the drift netsmen of Northumberland and the rich and famous along the banks of the river a few miles north, is fast developing into a full-blooded border conflict.

The dwindling band of English netsmen, upholders of a centuries-old tradition, stand accused of stealing Scottish fish — or, at any rate, salmon heading for northern rivers such as the Tweed, Tay and Spey — with little thought of conservation. But the English-based federation accuses the big landowners of cynically attacking the netsmen to protect their own interests.

Barrie Deas, the federation's chief executive, said: "This has little to do with whether the fishery operates on a sustainable basis and everything to do with the covetous efforts of the angling lobby to keep everything for the rods."

Every spring an estimated 50,000 salmon return to the Tweed system to breed, after leaving the river and its tributaries. Alarmed by an apparent decline in stocks, the River Tweed Commissioners has resorted to desperate measures.

It is asking anglers, who can pay more than $1,500 for a day's fishing, for the ultimate self-sacrifice: to return "a majority of fish caught" in an attempt to protect stocks.

Letter from Baluchistan Mary Dunlop

Patient with the cure

AT THE sight of my bra the women collapsed, giggling. A glimpse of my knickers — the first they had ever seen — had them convulsed with laughter.

I was not losing heavily at strip poker but checking women for leprosy in a remote corner of Baluchistan. As it was not long after arriving in the country my Urdu was shaky and the women, it turned out, spoke Baluchi anyway. My attempts at miming requests to undress puzzled them and I had resorted to practically undressing myself. The embarrassment of having my underwear greeted by hoots of hilarity provided ample motivation to learn the language pretty quickly.

Motivation is a word often used by Hussain Ali, who works for a leprosy control programme. "We have to motivate our patients to take their medication regularly, until discharged from treatment," he says.

"Some patients refuse to believe they have the disease. Others don't think the medicine is curing them because claw fingers don't become straight. A few think the drugs are too 'strong' for them and stop treatment."

Most leprosy patients can be discharged within six months to two years. But even if a patient has been regular in treatment, drug therapy is not always enough.

Hussain explains: "Killing the bacillus which causes leprosy is easy, but medication can not cure deformities. If a patient loses feeling in his hands and feet he has to learn how to prevent the injuries, burns, blisters and open wounds that lead to disabilities."

A large part of Hussain's work involves teaching patients how to prevent deformities. Hussain showed me Ismail's left foot on which the thickened skin was dry and cracking. Patiently, he set to work explaining, not for the first time, the importance of a daily soaking ritual. After smoothing the hard, rough skin with a pumice stone he applied sticking plaster over the cracks. Ismail promised to take better care of his feet.

"LAST month his foot had a small ulcer where a nail from his shoe had gone in. He had not noticed it, nor had he attended to the infected cracks. Somehow we have to find what will really motivate him to care for himself."

Hussain continued: "With some patients, like Ismail, it is almost as though he expects to become deformed. He feels it is his *kismet*, or fate, because he has leprosy. Some patients accept the deformities, subconsciously believing they are being punished by Allah for some wrongdoing."

The next visit was to a young woman, Fatima — Hussain's model patient. She had slight contracture of her fourth and fifth fingers caused by ulnar nerve damage. By carrying out the exercises taught by Hussain she had stopped the condition worsening and wore thick socks in the house to prevent any injuries to her feet.

When the disease was diagnosed Fatima had been terrified, convinced that no one would want to marry a leprosy patient. Hussain assured her, and her anxious parents, that if she followed his advice she would have no further deformities. No one need know she had had leprosy. The desire to be married was the motivation Fatima needed, and Hussain was invited to the wedding a few months after she was discharged

But no one had discovered how to motivate Ghulam Ali, an old patient who had been severely deformed before receiving treatment. He had been admitted to the ward because the dressings on his suppurating foot ulcers had to be changed daily. As the patient had no sensation in what was left of his nose, he was unaware that a fly had crawled in and laid its eggs. A young female paramedic had removed 18 fat, wriggling maggots.

"This is the kind of person who makes it difficult to convince people that leprosy is curable and not to be feared," says Hussain. He pulls a rueful face before adding: "Of course, these are the patients the fund-raisers like to hear about."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

ARE there any facilities for recycling CD-Roms? Or does anyone have any bright ideas as to what can be done with them?

I HAVE found two uses for them: they make very attractive outdoor Christmas decorations hung from branches on shiny ribbons; also, hung over garden beds, they are extremely effective in scaring off squirrels and birds. — *Janet Mullany, Maryland, USA*

MELT them in a special hot cup so that they bend and use them as planters. They have the holes already. String them up as mobiles. Sharpen and use them as pizza cutters. Use them as dishes at your next party. Much easier to cart around than the usual little saucers without holes in the middle. I could go on . . . — *Sarah Brock, Tokyo, Japan*

THEY make excellent coasters for standing your coffee mug on. — *Jeremy Thake, Littleover, Derby*

I AM unaware of anything constructive to do with them, but it is entertaining to microwave them for about seven seconds. — *David Mitchell, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

I USE them to keep birds off my fruit trees. Suspended by string, they twirl in the breeze and reflect the sun. — *Heddy Zola, Adelaide, Australia*

ALMOST everything people eat in Britain seems to come from elsewhere originally. What did people eat 100 years ago?

THEY ate family pigs and home-grown vegetables. Flora Thompson's Lark Rise To Candleford says: "In addition to the bacon, all vegetables, including potatoes, were home-grown and grown in abundance . . . Fat green peas, broad beans as big as a halfpenny, cauliflowers a child could make an armchair of, runner beans and cabbage and kale, all in their seasons went into the pot with the roly-poly and slip of bacon. Then they ate plenty of green food, all home-grown and freshly pulled; lettuce and radishes and young onions with pearly heads and leaves like fine grass."

A few slices of bread and home-made lard, flavoured with rosemary, and plenty of green food "went down good" as they used to say. Mary Norwak (a former Cookery Editor of Farmer Weekly) says that "butcher" meat (as it is still called in the country to this day) was rarely seen, and a joint of beef only appeared as a gift from a farmer at Christmas or wedding feasts.

The main meat supply was the family pig — shared with neighbours each year, who would in turn share their own pig. Home-cured bacon was eaten almost daily, supplemented by the occasional chicken or rabbit. Large quantities of vegetables were eaten, and the meal was completed by a filling suet pudding. — *Rodolfo Terragno, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

WHAT is it about an ant's anatomy that enables it to sniff out sugary food? Is it possible to block this receptivity?

WHATEVER it is about the ant's antennae system, all one need do is take advantage of it — and use this sensitivity against the ant. Choose a disinfectant you like the smell of and, in June, squirt it (diluted will do) along and around the tracks that ants use in the house, especially their ingress holes. Then go outside and repeat, generously, down every ventilator brick that you can locate at ground level. — *John Roycroft, London*

A FRIEND of mine got rid of ants in a most humane and pleasant manner — using peppermint essential oil. — *Emily Syme, Norwich*

In the May 17 issue the figure 1 was omitted from Ulrike Krauss's response to the number of segments in citrus fruit, rendering the answer meaningless. Our apologies

Any answers?

IS IT true that Benito Mussolini once had a play performed in London? — *Gordon Kirley, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

HOW does one classify something as a vitamin, and have we "discovered" all of them? — *Tunde Cockshott, Glasgow*

IS THERE any copyright on racehorse names? Would there be anything to prevent me from calling my horse Shergar? — *Peter Seymour, Kilkenny, Ireland*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

A Country Diary

Richard Mabey

CHILTERNS: In between the downpours, I've been out collecting records for the new Hertfordshire Flora, now in its last year of field research. A romantic voice inside me insists that this is no way to celebrate the ornaments of the earth, that it reduces them to scientific trophies, numbers on a score-sheet. But that is not how things work out. Today I've tramped up to Heathen Grove, a tangle of chalk scrub and ancient woodland in which I've found some remarkable species over the years, way outside their range. The round flower-heads of sanicle seem luminous in the gloom. The fading spikes of bugle have the blue glimmer of a low gas flame. Twayblade shoots just overtop the blanket of dog's mercury. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I see a colony of herb paris near a badger sett. The flowers are past their best, but I am so astonished I shout out loud, not just at their extraordinary orb-like structure, but because I'm sure they haven't been seen in this corner of the hills for generations. Back home I'm thrilled to read that Augustus Smith found them on this same estate in the 1840s. That is the real point of records: over the centuries, they transcend botanical geography and become small poems of survival.



Death and the German

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

***"What, again!"
Wodehouse waking up, aged 90.***

HEARING Dennis Potter effervescing about his plum tree ("The whitest, frothiest, blossomest blossom that there ever could be") was a vivid near-death experience. He sipped morphine with one clenched hand and chain-smoked with the other. He was very near death.

In Potter's posthumous play, Cold Lazarus, the dying man's soul shoots down a dizzying vortex of light, fast-forwarding through the highlights of his life. Robert Winston addressed this common near-death sensation, the tunnel of light, in the last programme of *The Human Body* (BBC1). The sense of joy, he said, may be caused by the brain releasing painkilling opiates and the brilliant light by neurons firing at random. Oh, dear. Then again, what does he know? He does not know, for instance, why we grow old, though he advanced various possibilities.

Herbie, a 63-year-old German, died on the programme. He said: "I like that everybody see that a human being can manage an illness like mine."

He was a big, colourful man with a ponytail. His inoperable stomach cancer gave him a deceptively bulky look. He called it the time bomb in his stomach.

He decided to die at home. It was an unexpected sort of home. When he phoned his wife, Hannelore, after an Irish fishing trip, she knew at once what he had done: "Oh no, don't tell me you've bought a house!" More a ruin, really. No running water. No inside lavatory. They lived there happily for 17 years.

Now Herbie had to make what the religious call a good death except that he was not a religious man. The last words he said to camera were: "I believe when I'm dead I'm dead. There is no other life. You are gone for ever."

They told him it would be painless and it wasn't. Sometimes he woke Hannelore at dawn crying "Help me!" After that he carried automatic morphine medication, pressing a button to kill the pain.

They had given him six months to live. He lasted a year and a half, but after Christmas — lobster and champagne — he deteriorated and naively asked his nurse for a fatal injection. "I don't want to live any more. Normally, I am not a man to give up so quick. Never. But this moment I had a feeling to give up."

He lived to see the blossoming spring and felt the same heightened delight as Potter. It was as though all deaths felt the same.

Brendan, a neighbour, brought his 10-year-old daughter to see him and sang: "Will you go, lassie, go/ And we'll all go together/ To pluck wild mountain thyme/ All around the blooming heather."

It was the same sweet, easy, Irish tenor I used to hear rising through the smoke of my parents' pub as I listened in my nightie. I thought I had forgotten that. In that radiant tunnel, which is, of course, only neurons firing at random, will I hear that sentimental sing-song again?

Herbie's ashes were scattered round his roses, as he had wanted, and Hannelore read the little speech he had written for the occasion to a flatteringly large circle of friends and neighbours. Herbie urged them to live together in peace.

I was greatly entertained. Anything more innocently likely to provoke a rumpus I can't imagine. I shall immediately start work on my own funeral oration, forgiving all my enemies except two.

A nice girl in the jungle

OBITUARY
Maureen O'Sullivan

SHE was a nice, convent-educated Catholic girl, and yet she will always be remembered in the eyes of filmgoers as a scantily-clad woman living in sin with a near-naked animalistic hunk of a man. Maureen O'Sullivan, who has died aged 87, played Jane to Johnny Weissmuller's Tarzan in six of the best of the many films based on the life of Edgar Rice Burroughs's jungle hero.

No plain Jane she, the shapely, dark-haired, dimpled O'Sullivan was barely 21 when she landed the role opposite the beautifully chiselled 27-year-old Olympic swimming champion Weissmuller in Tarzan The Ape Man (1932).

The relationship developed into a sexy and sparky one through Tarzan And His Mate (1934), Tarzan Escapes (1936), Tarzan Finds A Son (1939), Tarzan's Secret Treasure (1941) to Tarzan's New York Adventure (1942), although the puritanical Production Code gradually insisted the couple covered themselves more. In the tradition of "Play it again, Sam" and "Come with me to the Casbah", the line "Me Tarzan, you Jane" was never actually spoken on screen. The couple's introductory conversation merely consists of "Tarzan-Jane." "Jane-Tarzan".

O'Sullivan remembered: "I was never more consistently sick and miserable in all my life. I was never without an ache or a pain. I was never without a bite from one of those monkeys."

While Weissmuller went on to make six more Tarzan movies, O'Sullivan, who had a lovely, lilting voice, continued her parallel career as an MGM ingénue, mostly playing well-bred young English ladies such as Henrietta Barrett, in The Barretts Of Wimpole Street (1934), Dora, the sickly child-wife of David Copperfield (1934), and Jane Bennet, in Pride And Prejudice (1940).

Maureen O'Sullivan was born in County Roscommon in Ireland, and was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Roehampton, London. After attending finishing school in Paris, O'Sullivan was discovered in 1929 in a Dublin café by American director Frank Borzage, and offered a contract with Fox. After her debut in Borzage's Song O' My Heart (1930), she made a few further films at the studio including A Connecticut Yankee (1931).

In 1942 O'Sullivan retired from the screen to raise her growing family of seven children by the writer-director John Farrow, whom she met and married in 1936 when he was writing the screenplay of Tarzan Escapes.

Her third child, the actress Mia Farrow, recalled her as "a terrific mother, full of fairy tales, with a soft voice and a soothing manner . . . She was a mystical figure, and I sort of romanticised her."

O'Sullivan returned to the screen in brief roles in The Big Clock (1948) and Where Danger Lives (1950), two excellent thrillers directed by her husband. (He died in 1963, O'Sullivan only remarrying 20 years later.)

In 1986 she was cast by Woody Allen to play Mia Farrow's retired actress mother in Hannah And Her Sisters, which was shot in the large Central Park West apartment that Mia had shared with her mother.

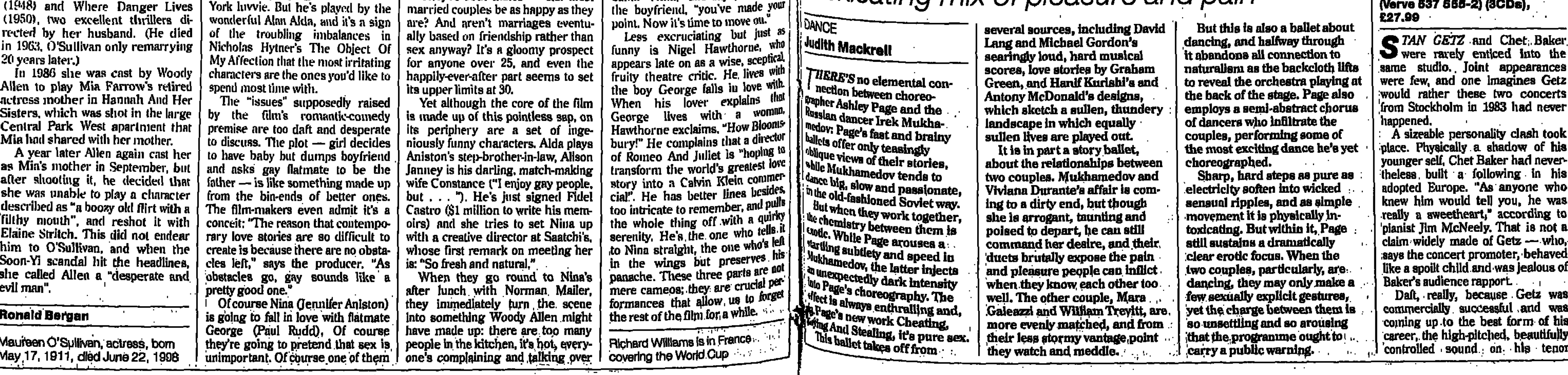
A year later Allen again cast her as Mia's mother in September, but after shooting it, he decided that she was unable to play a character described as "a boozy old flirt with a filthy mouth", and reshot it with Elaine Stritch. This did not endear him to O'Sullivan, and when the Soon-Yi scandal hit the headlines, she called Allen a "desperate and evil man".

Ronald Bergan

Maureen O'Sullivan, actress, born May 17, 1911, died June 22, 1998



O'Sullivan and Weissmuller in one of their many Tarzan films



Peripheral pleasures . . . Paul Rudd and Jennifer Aniston in The Object of My Affection

Hi honey, I'm homo

CINEMA
Gaby Wood

SIDNEY MILLER is "the most powerful literary agent in the world". He's a star-screwing, bandwagon-jumping, neurotic New York luvvie. But he's played by the wonderful Alan Alda, and it's a sign of the troubling imbalances in Nicholas Hytner's The Object Of My Affection that the most irritating characters are the ones you'd like to spend most time with.

The "issues" supposedly raised by the film's romantic-comedy premise are too daft and desperate to discuss. The plot — girl decides to have baby but dumps boyfriend and asks gay flatmate to be the father — is like something made up from the bin-ends of better ones. The film-makers even admit it's a conceit: "The reason that contemporary love stories are so difficult to create is because there are no obstacles left," says the producer. "As obstacles go, gay sounds like a pretty good one."

Of course Nina (Jennifer Aniston) is going to fall in love with flatmate George (Paul Rudd), Of course they're going to pretend that sex is unimportant. Of course one of them is going to need sex eventually, and it's not going to be Nina. As you can imagine, this kissy-kissy game of musical chaises longues (Aniston seems to be wearing pyjamas for most of it) leads to deep philosophical searchings.

They're soul mates — can most married couples be as happy as they are? And aren't marriages eventually based on friendship rather than sex anyway? It's a gloomy prospect for anyone over 25, and even the happily-ever-after part seems to set its upper limits at 30.

Yet although the core of the film is made up of this pointless sap, on its periphery are a set of ingeniously funny characters. Alda plays Aniston's step-brother-in-law, Allson Janney is his darling, match-making wife Constance ("I enjoy gay people, but . . . "). He's just signed Fidel Castro ($1 million to write his memoirs) and she tries to set Nina up with a creative director at Saatchi's, whose first remark on meeting her is: "So fresh and natural."

When they go round to Nina's after lunch with Norman Mailer, they immediately turn the scene into something Woody Allen might have made up: there are too many people in the kitchen, it's hot, everyone's complaining and talking over each other, Alda thinks he has food poisoning, someone drops the air-conditioning unit, and in among this Nina announces she's pregnant. Alda is in a swoon: "Fan me with something. Is that the New Yorker? Fan me with the New Yorker!"

Towards the end of the film, when Nina is happily involved with a black policeman, Constance is still trying to find her a suitable husband. "Nina," she says, looking at the boyfriend, "you've made your point. Now it's time to move on."

Less excruciating but just as funny is Nigel Hawthorne, who appears late on as a wise, sceptical, fruity theatre critic. He lives with the boy George falls in love with. When his lover explains that George lives with a woman, Hawthorne exclaims, "How Bloomsbury!" He complains that a director of Romeo And Juliet is "hoping to transform the world's greatest love story into a Calvin Klein commercial". He has better lines besides, too intricate to remember, and pulls the whole thing off with a quirky serenity. He's the one who tells it to Nina straight, the one who's left in the wings but preserves his panache. These three parts are not mere cameos; they are crucial performances that allow us to forget the rest of the film for a while.

Richard Williams is in France covering the World Cup

Identity parade

THEATRE
Michael Billington

DAVID MAMET constantly writes about the fear and fantasy that underlies male bluster. But his latest play, **The Old Neighbourhood** at London's Royal Court, though deeply personal, sounds a wider, more universal note. It is about the mid-life sense of loss, about awareness of mortality and about abandonment of community in a deeply individualistic age. It is as poignant as anything Mamet has written.

Running only 80 minutes, it takes the form of three interwoven scenes in which the hero, Bobby Gould (Mamet's alter ego?), returns home in search of his roots.

In the first and most typically Mametesque encounter, Bobby (Colin Stinton) meets an old buddy, Joey. Beneath all the bullish back-chat, what you hear is the sound of pain. Bobby laments that he has married a shiksa: Joey yearns for the active experience of European shtetl. Filled with reminiscence and the corrosive sadness of missed chances, it is, if you can imagine such a thing, like a Jewish version of the Shallow-Silence scenes in Shakespeare's Henry IV Part Two.

In the second scene Bobby meets his married sister, Jolly (Zoe Wanamaker), seething in her kitchen over her maltreatment by her inherited gentile relations. Once again, the piece is suffused with a yearning for a lost past — in this case the sibling intimacies of childhood — and a resentment of the humiliations that have resulted from their mother's marrying out.

What is astonishing is how much ground Mamet covers in three short scenes. Although he is writing very specifically about the loss of Jewish identity and the perils of assimilation, he is also dealing with the great Chekhovian theme of what-might-have-been. This is Mamet at his most autobiographical and yet his most universal.

Needless to say, he also shows his usual uncanny ear for the elliptical rhythms of everyday speech, something well caught in Patrick Marber's fine production played out against William Dudley's sepia images of a lost communal life.

Paedophilia is a hot topic. But despite expressions of outrage from Family and Youth Concern, there is nothing corrupting or dangerous about Paula Vogel's prize-winning New York play, **How I Learned to Drive**. It is a perfectly decent, responsible work about the nature of erotic obsession. Its failings are aesthetic rather than moral.

Vogel's prime virtue is her refusal to turn the paedophile into a melodramatic monster. He is a suburban Maryland ex-marine known as Uncle Peck who suffers from a fixation with his prematurely developed niece, Li'l Bit. In a series of short, pungent scenes covering a seven-year period, we see how Uncle Peck uses driving lessons as a form of courtship, how he exploits his niece's burgeoning sexuality in a private photo-shoot and how he is driven to distraction, and Li'l Bit to the bottle, when she finally goes away to college.

Nothing in the play will surprise anyone who has read Lolita. Like Nabokov, Vogel suggests that the paedophile's obsession is rooted in his own disturbed childhood. But what I suspect really offends the moralists is that Vogel, like Nabokov, steadfastly refuses to buy the myth of childhood innocence: Li'l Bit, even after her uncle's first advance, knowingly uses her sexuality as a form of power.

Vogel shows how both characters are damaged by the experience. But she also honestly depicts the affinity between them. And, in John Crowley's production, the scenes between Helen McCrory's Li'l Bit and Kevin Whately's Uncle Peck are both touching and erotically tense.

The burning reality of their encounters only serves to heighten the clumsy cartoon quality of the surrounding family scenes. Not then a perfect play but one that makes nonsense of the argument, advanced by one protest group, that "any presentation of paedophilia is damaging". Vogel approaches the subject with an inquiring, rather than a closed, mind and for that she is to be applauded.

Brotherly love . . . Jolly (Zoe Wanamaker) and Bobby (Colin Stinton) in David Mamet's poignant play about assimilation PHOTO ROBBIE JACK

Zimmerman to Zimmer frame

POP CONCERT
Pat Kane

DOES age wither the rock star? When the Stones have to cancel dates because Keith Richards has tottered off his library ladders, we sense that this is a bone-brittle moment in the greying of rock'n'roll. Time, to be blunt, is not on their side.

At what point do we go out to watch the great relics perform — and none greater than **Van Morrison** and **Bob Dylan** — in the way that audiences watched the later Sinatra: as an act of homage and respect, while genius crumbles valiantly before us?

The truth is that Dylan stands much, much closer to that mausoleum moment than Morrison. Dylan performing in Glasgow, was a man desperately fighting against what the passing years have done to his talent and ambition, and only occasionally winning through. Morrison, meanwhile, looked and sounded as if he had been waiting to be 53 all his musical life — because now, at last, he could get it right.

And he got it right, sho' nuff. Has there ever been a funkier, grittier, more passionate version of the Morrison sound-world than this one? He was here to have fun — not too difficult, you'd have to say, with this band. A supple Hammond-and-horns-led soul-revue — Pee Wee Ellis on one side, Georgie Fame on the other — took the Philosopher's classics and gave them a super-cool, muscled-jazz interpretation.

And Morrison responded with a vocal energy we haven't heard for 20 years. Some stunning segues, too — from Sly Stone's Thank You Falletinme Be Mice Elf Again, steaming into his own Burning Ground, and bridged by a classic Van mystical rap. What a miserable, magnificent old bastard: if middle-age does this to him, bring on the Zimmer frame.

Mr Zimmerman, on the other hand, looks as if he already needs some tubular support. His two-note guitar solos and gingerly executed rock poses suggest someone who's doing this for music therapy as much as artistic statement. And the trademark vocal drone — which once spoke truth and authenticity — has now permanently split between a frog-like gurgle and a thoroughly shattered falsetto, scrambling the words of songs such as Masters Of War and Desolation Row into a tiresome glossolalia.

Yet the greying Dylan-heads loved it all.

Robin Denselow adds: It's hard to imagine anywhere less like downtown Havana than Shepherd's Bush Green in west London, but Juan de Marcos Gonzalez seemed determined to transform the Empire into something approaching a Cuban nightclub. He was outrageously dressed in a red beret, red jacket and dreadlocks, and surrounded by the 15-piece **Afro-Cuban All Stars** whose ages ranged from 22 to 73.

As midnight and the final encore approached, he put his arms around one of his male singers, an elderly, pencil-thin man dressed in a suit, tie and cloth cap, and announced, "This is Cuba's Sinatra". For a brief moment, the brass section eased off and the writhing salsa dancing gave way to a gently crooning ballad before the choppy rhythms started again. Ibrahim Ferrer may be 71, but he proved that he's still in remarkable voice.

Ferrer's life, like that of several other veteran Cuban musicians, has been transformed by Juan de Marcos. For years the leader of the acoustic band Sierra Maestra, De Marcos decided he wanted to revive the sound of the Cuban big-band music of the forties and fifties, and reunite those stars of the era who were still alive and capable of performing. Ferrer was among them.

It was like a Latin version of a sixties Motown review, with different performers — the *soneros* — constantly coming forward. Along with Ferrer there was "Puntilla" Licea, a major star in the fifties and now looking like an energetic diplomat; the somewhat excitable Teresita Garcia Caturla, part of an all-female orchestra in the sixties and now looking like Havana's answer to Shirley Bassey; and Felix Valoy, still in his fifties, dressed in white hat and white bow tie as if this were his everyday clothing. It was a great, sweaty night out.

Intoxicating mix of pleasure and pain

DANCE
Judith Mackrell

THERE'S **no elemental connection between choreographer Ashley Page and the Russian dancer Irek Mukhamedov: Page's fast and brainy ballets offer only teasingly oblique views of their stories, while Mukhamedov tends to dance big, slow and passionate, in the old-fashioned Soviet way.**

But when they work together, the chemistry between them is exotic. While Page arouses a startling subtlety and speed in Mukhamedov, the latter injects an unexpectedly dark intensity into Page's choreography. The effect is always enthralling and, in Page's new work Cheating, Lying And Stealing, it's pure sex.

This ballet takes off from several sources, including David Lang and Michael Gordon's searingly loud, hard musical scores, love stories by Graham Green, and Hanif Kurishi's and Antony McDonald's designs, which sketch a sullen, thundery landscape in which equally sullen lives are played out.

It is in part a story ballet, about the relationships between two couples. Mukhamedov and Viviana Durante's affair is coming to a dirty end, but though she is arrogant, taunting and poised to depart, he can still command her desire, and their duets brutally expose the pain and pleasure people can inflict when they know each other too well. The other couple, Mara Galeazzi and William Trevitt, are more evenly matched, and from their less stormy vantage point they watch and meddle.

But this is also a ballet about dancing, and halfway through it abandons all connection to naturalism as the backcloth lifts to reveal the orchestra playing at the back of the stage. Page also employs a semi-abstract chorus of dancers who infiltrate the couples, performing some of the most exciting dance he's yet choreographed.

Sharp, hard steps as pure as electricity soften into wicked sensual ripples, and as simple movement it is physically intoxicating. But within it, Page still sustains a dramatically clear erotic focus. When the two couples, particularly, are dancing, they may only make a few sexually explicit gestures, yet the charge between them is so unsettling and so arousing that the programme ought to carry a public warning.

CD Review Ronald Atkins

Battle of the saxes

**Stan Getz & Chet Baker
The Stockholm Concerts
(Verve 537 555-2) (3CDs),
£27.99**

STAN GETZ and Chet Baker were rarely enticed into the same studio. Joint appearances were few, and one imagines Getz would rather these two concerts from Stockholm in 1983 had never happened.

A sizeable personality clash took place. Physically a shadow of his younger self, Chet Baker had nevertheless built a following in his adopted Europe. "As anyone who knew him would tell you, he was really a sweetheart," according to pianist Jim McNeely. That is not a claim widely made of Getz — who, says the concert promoter, behaved like a spoilt child and was jealous of Baker's audience rapport.

Daft, really, because Getz was commercially successful and was coming up to the best form of his career, the high-pitched, beautifully controlled sound on his tenor saxophone more luxuriant than ever.

This time, the somewhat disorganised Baker was gifted with an excellent rhythm section — apart from McNeely, Getz used bassist George Mraz and drummer Victor Lewis. As a result his trumpet playing is less wistful and much stronger than was often the case, the notes ringing out clarion-like. And because Baker, who joins in on about half the 22 tracks, tended to draw his material from early Miles Davis, fans of the saxophonist will relish hearing Getz tackle tunes such as Airegin, Milestones and My Funny Valentine that had no place in his current repertory.

There were other quintet gigs, at which tapings were no doubt made, though Getz called a halt halfway through the tour and laid down an it's-him-or-me ultimatum. As the lesser draw, poor Baker was handed his cards.